

The Quest for Mama

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Spoilers for chap. 367. When Naruto hears that his feisty mother, Kushina, is alive, he heads off, dragging friends old and new along on an journey that just might be their last!

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Kawazaki

Ossu! This is my first Naruto fanfiction, though not my first fanfiction! When upon hearing about Naruto's mother, Uzumaki Kushina, I've wanted to do a fanfiction like this. You can say I am partially inspired by Popeye, and you'll see how! The main basis of this story centers on the question, *What if Kushina was alive???*

Naruto belongs to Kishimoto-san.

Opening theme: You-You-You(5th theme of Sgt. Frog)

The Quest for Mama

Chapter 1: *Kawazaki*

It all began in the Hokage's office in the Village Hidden in the Leaves...

"Whaddya wanna see me for, Gramma!?"

That was how it all started. All it took to set the most perilous adventure for the Leaf's No. 1 Maverick Ninja was a rude question for the Hidden Leaf's Village's 5th Hokage.

Tsunade felt a vein about to pop as she tried not to lose focus on *why* she sent for the most exasperating shinobi in the Village and simply punch him into the wall. (There was a wall labeled, *Reserved for Uzumaki Naruto* . The opposing wall was labeled, *Reserved for Jiraiya* !)

"Listen, brat," Tsunade began, shifting slightly, making her notable physique more noticeable, "According to Kakashi's last report, the Ninetails' chakra leaked out during the mission...when there was no need for it."

Naruto made an uncomfortable expression as he rubbed the back of his foot with his other foot's toes. "I don't know how it happened," He muttered apologetically, "But it was only for a minute, I barely remember it happening...except for that patch of grass getting burnt."

Tsunade sighed and straightened up, looking Naruto directly in the eyes. "Naruto, if that demon's chakra is coming out without your consent, then there's something seriously wrong with the seal the 4th Hokage used to put the Fox into you." She said pointedly. "That's why for the sake of your safety- if not the world's- I've called in for a specialist."

"Huh??" Naruto asked, squinting, "You mean there are people who *specialize* in this sorta stuff?! Who aren't Ero-Sennin?!"

"Yup," Tsunade nodded, grinning at Naruto's reaction. If anything, Naruto looked cute when he scrunched his face like. (Not that she'd tell him that...) Getting serious, she said, "This seal master comes straight from Mt. Oinari, the nexus point of all supernatural activity in the world."

"Mt. Oinari?" Naruto wondered, making a 'look, I'm thinking' arm position. "That sounds familiar..."

"Mt. Oinari is where the Fourth learned to seal the Fox." Tsunade answered.

Naruto brightened up. "Cool! When's he get here?"

"Actually, he's already arrived. He just went to the bathroom while we were waiting for you." Tsunade saw the door open and close. "And he's back."

Naruto turned around, but couldn't see anybody. He then heard a well-to-do voice say, "Behind you, good fellow."

Turning around, Naruto didn't see anything- save the vine-green frog that was now sitting on Tsunade's desk. This frog was the size of small dog(Half of Pakkun's size), wore a well-tailored jacket, a wooden rain hat, and had a japanese pipe, like Gamabunta's, sticking out of his mouth.

"Salutations." The frog said. Naruto facefaulted.

"It talked!" Naruto cried from the floor.

"Naruto," Tsunade said, keeping a straight face. "This is Mr. Kawazaki. He's going to fix your seal."

"B-but, he's a frog..." Naruto said weakly. Realizing that Tsunade was serious about this, he looked down at the frog as the amphibious one puffed his piped. "Nice to meet you, um, Mr. Kawazaki."

"Likewise," The frog said, tipping his hat. He glanced at Tsunade, and said, "He *does* resemble Minato, doesn't he? But his face is rounder, like Kushina's." Kawazaki began to look around. "Where *is* Kushina, anyhow? I haven't sensed her presence once since entering the village."

"Wait!" Naruto said hoarsely, "Who's Kushina? Or Minato?!"

"They're the names of your mother and father," Tsunade answered somberly, "And they're dead."

"What?" Kawazaki looked confused. "I don't see how that is possible. I know that Minato died 15 years ago from using that technique, but there's no way for someone like Kushina to be dead. Let me see..."

As Kawazaki closed his eyes and took a meditative stance, a whirlwind of thoughts rushed through Naruto's head much faster than he felt comfortable.

I have a mom...? My mom's alive!?

"Aha!"

Naruto was shaken out of his stupor by Kawazaki's triumphant yell.

"I have her! No wonder I couldn't sense her! She wasn't anywhere near the Village!" Kawazaki then frowned. "But what is she doing *there* , of all places? That area is fit for neither man nor beast..."

Tsunade reached down under her desk and took a long draft of sake. "Kawazaki," She said, wiping her mouth, "Are you saying that Uzumaki Kushina is still alive? After all this time?"

Kawazaki nodded. "Yes, I'm sure of it."

"Where?"

The frog and the 5th looked at Naruto. His face was pointing down so they couldn't see his eyes past his blond bangs, and his hands were shaking.

"Where is she?" Naruto asked again, his voice trembling. "Where's my mother?"

Kawazaki cleaned his pipe for a moment. (Get it ready for next time...) After putting it away, he pointed one webbed hand toward the office window. "The island is in that direction."

Then everything went crazy.

D A T T E B A Y O (That's the scene change)

In the hall, Shizune was on her way to deliver some documents for Tsunade to sign when she heard a loud crash from within the office. Dropping the papers, Shizune rushed in. Crashes weren't an uncommon sound coming from Tsunade's administration, especially when Naruto was around (She wondered if insults and physical abuse was their way of exchanging affection), but there was something off about this ruckus.

Her fears were well deserved. Tsunade's desk had been knocked over, papers were all over the place, Tsunade herself was on the floor, looking like she had been thrown there(And that wasn't easy to pull off!), and there was a person-shaped hole where what was used to be a window once was.

"Lady Tsunade, what happened?!" Shizune cried, rushing to her mentor's aid.

"Naruto's what happened!" Tsunade snapped, gripping her turned over desk for support. Her mind was racing.

Even for this, I can't believe that brat would charge off like that...!

"Shizune!" Tsunade barked, and Shizune quickly stood to attention. "I want you to bring me the following shinobi for an important mission! Now!"

"Yes!" Shizune ran out after being given the list, leaving Tsunade alone with her thoughts.

An island fit for neither man nor beast...? Naruto, be careful...

D A T T E B A Y O

Outside the village, leaving a trail of ruin behind him as he ran, Naruto charged down the road, Kawazaki tucked under his arm. As he sped off, he saw for a brief moment in the darkest and deepest recesses of his memories a bright smile and mane of beautiful red hair.

I'm coming, mom! Whoever you are!

D A T T E B A Y O (Notes this time)

Kawazaki is a combination of *kawazu* , a Japanese word for frog and Yoshizaki, manga-ka of the *Sgt. Frog* series.

Mt. Oinari is where the original *Naruto* pilot began.

Ero-Sennin means, loosely, perverted hermit. It's sorta like Kame Sennin, Turtle Hermit.

Team Shikamaru II

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto . Just in case no one was paying attention the first time.

Opening theme: *Fighting Dreamers* (Naruto 4th opening theme)

Chapter 2: Team Shikamaru II

On the road away from the Hidden Leaf Village, two disreputable-looking characters were taking a moment from their busy schedule to enjoy the sunny day.

"Man, what a slow day," One grouched, adjusting his sunglasses, "We haven't mugged nobody for a whole hour."

"Relax," The other said, grinning like a crocodile, "Some poor sap is bound to show up!"

"Oh yeah?" The sunglasses asked, giving his buddy a sidelong glance, "Like who?"

"I dunno- probably some dumb kid on a journey of discovery, or something." Croc-grin then saw an approaching figure. "See? Here comes someone now."

As the orange and black clad person came closer, Sunglasses felt something. Getting on one knee, he pressed his ear to the earth.

"Is the ground shaking?" he asked, but Croc-grin wasn't paying attention to him.

"Hey, buddy!" The cocky bandit called out to the incoming individual (The shaking was getting worse!), "A moment of your time, ple-"

"OUTTA MY WAY!" Naruto roared, punching and kicking the two crooks off the path. As Croc-grin crashed into a tree-trunk, and

Sunglasses landed on a pile of rocks, Kawazaki called out to them, "Pardon us!"

D A T T E B A Y O

Back in the Leaf Village's Hokage Office, Tsunade took a moment to observe the ninja she had called for.

Nara Shikamaru, strategist and shadow-manipulation technique user.

Hyuuga Hinata, Byakugan barer and Gentle Fist user.

Rock Lee, Taijutsu specialist, as well as the only one who could beat Naruto in positive thinking.

And finally, Haruno Sakura, her apprentice.

Truthfully, the 5th wanted a Jounin in the group, but with the only ones she trusted for a mission like this incapacitated, (Kakashi was injured from previous mission, Yamato sick from some too-spicy ramen Naruto talked him into eating, and Guy was out on another mission with Anko) they were the best she could get.

"Naruto has left the Village," Tsunade said, cutting right to the point. The reactions were everything she expected.

"WHAAAT!?" Screamed Sakura and Lee, their eyes bugging out.

"He what...?" Hinata asked, looking like the world had ended.

Shikamaru gaped for a second, resembling a fish out of water, before collecting himself. "Why would Naruto abandon the Village?" The Nara heir asked. Naruto was always going on about how he'll become Hokage, and after hearing what had happened to that masked Akatsuki from Choji and Ino, (In GREAT detail) he was starting to believe it. So to hear this was like being dropped in a pool of ice water.

"I never said Naruto abandoned the Village," Tsunade said calmly, (The Council was going to have field day with this one!) "However, we, that is, the two of us, just received word that his mother, Kushina, is alive. He's gone out to find her."

That had certainly got the chunin's attention.

"Naruto's...mother?" Hinata asked softly, her white eyes widening.

"How is that possible?" Sakura asked, trying to make sense of the situation. "I thought..."

"That Naruto's parents died the day the Ninetailed Fox attacked the village, along with so many others?" Tsunade chuckled sardonically, "Yeah, I can see why you would think that. While Naruto's *father* died on that day, no question about that, Kushina was reportedly killed a year after that."

"And now we get word that she's alive?" Shikamaru asked skeptically. "How do we know this isn't a trick?" He knew, or heard, that certain criminal elements were out to get Naruto. He didn't want his loudmouthed friend walking into a trap.

"I trust the source with my life," Tsunade said firmly, "And you'll have to, too."

"Huh?" Sakura asked.

"Your mission is to support Naruto on his search," Tsunade commanded, "Don't come back unless they're coming with you."

"Leave it to us!" Lee gave the fifth a thumbs-up and smiled a shining smile. "We'll find him, I promise! Just tell us where to go, even if it's just a general direction!"

"A general direction is all we have." Tsunade said sourly. "Naruto took off with the guide."

"Swell," Shikamaru muttered, rolling his eyes heavenward.

This is going to be such a pain!

"Kushina's location is apparently on an island to the southeast," Tsunade continued, ignoring Shikamaru. "Try and catch up with Naruto before he heads out to sea. Now get moving!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

As the team left Tsunade's office, Shikamaru set his brain to work. If Naruto was going out to sea, that would mean he'd need a boat. Not even the Village's No. 1 Maverick would try the walking-on-water technique across the ocean. And if he needed a boat...

"Sakura, get a map out and pinpoint any ports to the southeast," He ordered. As Sakura inspected the map, he turned to Lee and Hinata. "Hinata, do an inventory check on our weapons. Lee, go collect food rations- and bring extra for Naruto. I'll help Sakura."

As Lee and Hinata went about their tasks, Shikamaru went to map. As his eyes skimmed the print, Sakura let out a triumphant yell.

"That's it! That's where he's going!" Sakura pointed to an area on the map.

Shikamaru looked to where she was pointing. "There? That country?"

Sakura beamed. "Why not? It's in the direction we're supposed to be going, and Naruto knows somebody who lives in that area. He'll be there."

Shikamaru decided to take Sakura's word for it. He looked again at the part of the map Sakura was talking about.

The Land of Waves?

D A T T E B A Y O

The Land of Waves, with the construction of the Great Naruto Bridge and without the scheming of Gato, had become a bustling port of trade. Ships would come in selling their cargo to merchants who would use the Bridge to sell the wares more inland. That being said, it meant the crowds had become much more active in recent times.

"Man, this neighborhood sure livened up from when I was here!" Naruto said in wonder, looking around at all the people.

"Indeed," Kawazaki said from his seat on Naruto's head. He puffed his pipe a bit before speaking. "I certainly hope we can procure a vessel for the voyage."

"Yeah, it seems like everyone's using their ship for something..." Naruto then heard a commotion. Moving through the crowd, Naruto pushed past a strange character in a samurai robe and a mask with a buddha manji where the face should be. In the center of the crowd, given plenty of space by everyone else, a tall punk-ish looking man with a Mohawk had knife at, pointing it threateningly at a boy. This boy looked to be about 12 or 13 years old, and had bandage on his left hand. He wore a workman's shirt and blue jeans. To top it off, the boy had a rope tied around his forehead.

He looks familiar... Naruto thought of the boy.

"Look, boy, yer drawin' a crowd 'ere," The punk sneered, "Why don'tcha just leave that money on the ground, and no one gets hurt."

"That's a good idea, I'd hate to beat a wuss like you up," the boy shot back with a grin, "But no thanks!"

The punk's smile dropped. "I'll shut ya up f' good, ya brat!"

He swung his knife at the boy, but missed as the boy kicked his arm away. Following up, the boy swung around and elbowed the punk in the gut. And finally, he delivered a stunning uppercut, sending the would-be mugger down.

"He's good," Naruto commented. Up on his head, Kawazaki clapped his webbed hands.

"Very well down," The frog agreed.

As the crowd parted, the boy suddenly met Naruto eyes.

There was a good pause before the kid yelled, "Bro!" and charged.

Naruto wasn't expecting an attack from a kid, so didn't react in time to stop the tackle. He then realized it wasn't so much a tackle as it was a tackling hug.

"Bro! I can't believe it's you, Naruto!" the boy said, smiling widely.

Naruto wasn't sure what to say. "Uhh..."

"You remember Inari, don't you!?" The boy asked excitedly.

"Sure I do," Naruto nodded. Then his brain made the connection and he blanched as images of a small crying boy flashed through his thoughts.

"Inari!?"

D A T T E B A Y O

I bet no one was expecting that! See ya next time! And please review. I need to know if people are reading, and your comments will help my writing.

The Location

I do not own Naruto. Kishimoto-san does.

Opening theme: Crazy Rainbow (7th opening theme of One Piece)

Chapter 3: *The Location*

The streets of the port town were abuzz with activity as Naruto and Inari walked through the crowds.

"I can't believe how much you grew," Naruto commented as they walked, "I didn't even recognize you!"

Inari grinned. "You can't say I'm a crybaby anymore, huh?"

"Yah, sure I can. Wouldn't be true though, huh?" Naruto laughed, "Where'd you learn to fight so good, anyway?"

"Well, after your team got rid of Gato," Inari explained, expertly kicking a stray soda can into a trashcan, "Lots of other under bosses tried to take control of his territory, but we wouldn't let them. Everything I know about fighting I picked up on the fly." Inari softly shook a bag he was carrying. "I'm working at the docks as carpenter's apprentice now!"

"A truly commendable accomplishment, to be sure," Kawazaki mentioned from his post on Naruto's head.

"Thanks! I..." Inari trailed off when he realized who said that. Jaw open, eyes wide, Inari pointed and cried, "It talks!"

"Yeah, he does that sometimes," Naruto smirked, enjoying Inari's expression.

"B-but, it's a frog..." Inari said weakly.

Kawazaki tipped his hat in Inari's direction. "Kawazaki of the Mt. Oinari frogs at your service, young man."

Speechless, Inari looked at Naruto for help.

Naruto shrugged. "He's okay. A little on the stiff side. But you know, talking frogs aren't the strangest thing in the world, now." To emphasize this point, Naruto nodded toward some kind of street performer. This odd man was tall and skinny, wearing polka-dotted pants, a stripped shirt, and checkered hat in all colors of the rainbow. The entire look was capped off by bells lined all over his body, which sang as he moved.

"I believe it, bro." Inari agreed. And the three moved on.

D A T T E B A Y O

Inari pushed through the door of his house, and announced, "Mom, I'm home!"

Tsunami, Inari's mother poked her from the kitchen and brightened. "Welcome back, Inari! How was work today?"

"It was okay. Mr. Moko is letting me help with the ships now." Inari then gestured toward the orange and black figure entering. "But look who I met in town today!"

Tsunami stared for moment. "Is that...Naruto?"

Naruto waved, smiling. "Hey, ma'am."

Tsunami began to smile. "It *is* Naruto! My, how you've grown! We've been expecting you!"

Naruto scratched the back of his head, enjoying the praise(Was it praise?) he wasn't used to getting. "Yeah, I've better than I was before- wait, how'd you know I was in town?"

Tsunami didn't answer. Instead, she pointed into the next room. Seated around the table was none other than Team Shikamaru II!

Naruto gaped. "Y...you guys..."

Shikamaru gave him a lazy wave hello. "Hey, Naruto."

Sakura got up from her chair and moved toward her teammate. "Naruto..."

Naruto felt uneasy. "Sakura..."

POW!

"You idiot! When are you going to learn not to go half-cocked!?" Sakura demanded.

Naruto clutched his bruised noggin. "Sakuraaaa..." He whined. Looking up, he asked, "What are you guys doing here?"

"W-we're here to help you with your search, N-naruto..." Hinata stammered, blushing slightly from talking to her crush.

"Huh?" Naruto let go of his head(He's such a fast healer!) in confusion.

"The 5th Hokage gave us the lowdown," Explained Shikamaru, "We're here to back you up on your search for your mom."

Naruto couldn't believe it. "You guys...You don't have to do that..."

"Of course we do!" Lee boomed suddenly, his eyes filled with fire, "We are all Leaf Ninjas! Your problems are our problems!"

"That's good to hear," Kawazaki said, hopping onto the table. "I was afraid we were going to that god-forsaken place alone."

There was a long pause as everyone took in what Kawazaki said. Or rather, that he said something.

Then it ended.

"It...it talked!?" Gaspd Tsunami, dropping a plate she was cleaning.

"But it's a frog!" Cried Lee, jumping back.

"Hey, what's all the noise?" Tazuna, former client of Team 7 walked in from another door, holding a winebottle. "Can't an old man step outside for a minute without the world ending?"

D A T T E B A Y O

After introductions were exchanged, everyone got down to business.

"Now, Mister...Kawazaki," Shikamaru began, taking a sip of tea, "What makes you think Naruto's mother is alive? According to reports dating 14 years back, she was killed by a team of rogue ninja." Naruto shot Shikamaru a death glare for even *suggesting* this was a wild goose chase.

Kawazaki puffed his pipe for moment. "First off, I do not believe Kushina was ever killed. Most likely her death was faked and she was imprisoned." He paused to puff his pipe again. "Secondly, I can sense chakra from anyone I have met before. With that ability, I am able to pinpoint her location, or at least know what direction she's in."

"Can you tell us where she is supposed to be?" Lee asked, fuzzy eyebrow raised.

"I have a pretty good idea," Kawazaki admitted, "But to be sure, I would need some kind of sea chart."

"I have something." Tsunami left the room, and after a minute, came back with a rolled up piece of paper. As she spread it out on the table, Tsunami explained. "My first husband was sailor. After he died at sea, he left me his charts."

"Much obliged," Kawazaki said, scanning the chart. After a minute, he frowned. "I thought as much. And I wish I hadn't."

"Why?" Sakura asked.

Kawazaki took off his hat and wiped his brow. "I'm afraid that Uzumaki Kushina is on Kaiju Island- the Land of Monsters."

Only Tazuna seemed to know what Kawazaki was talking about, as he dropped his bottle in horror. The rest looked at the frog in confusion.

"Kaiju Island? Land of Monsters?" Shikamaru asked skeptically, "What kind of place is that?"

"The worst kind." Everyone turned to look at Tazuna, who continued. "Back when I was a brat, there was a place used as a banishing point for the most dangerous super-criminals; guys so evil and dangerous that death alone wasn't a fitting punishment for them. These villains were exiled on a remote island to the south-west, rumored to be covered in the most vicious creatures that nature could come up with. Things too horrible to be called mere animals."

Hinata gasped.

"And...And my mom is there!?" Naruto clenched his fists, shaking with fear, rage, and many other emotions.

Kawazaki nodded. Without another word, Naruto bolted toward the door. His exit, however, was hampered by Sakura and Lee, who both took the liberty to tackle and hold him down.

"Lemme go!" Naruto snarled, trying to shake free.

"Naruto, calm down!" Sakura replied, keeping a deathgrip on his wrist and shoulders, "Do you *want* to get killed?!"

"If any of what Mr. Tazuna said is true, then we cannot act rash," Lee said firmly, "We know you want to find your mother, but-"

"WHAT WOULD ANY OF YOU KNOW!?" Naruto screamed, tears showing, "YOU ALL HAD *YOUR* MOMS!"

Shocked, Sakura and Lee let go while the others stared. Instead of making his escape, Naruto lowered his head down into the carpet and began to cry.

"I'm tired... I'm tired of being the orphaned guy...I don't even know why..." He sobbed, his tears staining the fabric. "I just wanna meet her...I wanna know who she is... *I want my mom!* "

The room was silent then, save for Naruto's sobs. As Inari watched his hero cry his heart out, he remembered something Kakashi said 3 years ago.

"Naruto doesn't remember any of his parents...or have any friends." Kakashi said, "Truth is, he's had a rougher past than you. But I have never once seen him cry or complain."

Inari felt some tears of his own come out.

"We'll find her, Naruto." Hinata spoke up. Naruto glanced up from his spot on the rug. "I promise."

Lee and Sakura helped Naruto up, setting him on his feet.

"We should get some extra help from the Village," Shikamaru mentioned, "But that would be a pain to do." Getting up, the lazy chunin stretched out and yawned. "So we might as well get going now."

Naruto wiped the tears from his face. "You guys..."

"We're very glad to hear that," Kawazaki said, cleaning his pipe, "But we still need to find a ship to sail on."

"I know somebody," Tazuna said, taking a sip from the unbroken bottle, "But he hangs out at a pretty rough joint. Think you can handle a trip to the slums?"

The Turtle

Naruto belongs to Kishimoto. And would it kill you people to REVIEW!? I know you guys are reading this!

Opening theme: Baka Survivor(2nd opening of Bobobo-bo Bo-bobo)

Chapter 4: *The Turtle*

" There's a Captain Mako in town, looking for someone to take his ship," Tazuna said, "You'll find him at the Turtle, the worst dive in the country."

"That's what Mr. Tazuna said," Sakura fumed, eyes darting back and forth, from one side of the street to the other, "But I wish he gave us better directions."

Tazuna's 'directions' were nothing more than a piece of paper, with a scrawl of the Wave Country's outline. On one point of the 'map' was a dot labeled, 'You are here' with another dot labeled, 'The Turtle'.

"At least we know where to look," Naruto said, "I was afraid we'd have to search the whole country!"

Shikamaru looked skyward and sighed. "Yeah, now we just have to search the bad part of town,"

"That is no problem!" Lee flashed him a thumbs-up. "All we need to do is ask for directions!" Lee bounded over to the nearest man. "Excuse me, sir, but I was wondering..."

"I gave at the office!" The nervous-looking man said, and took off with the speed of a humming bird's wingpattern.

Lee stared at the retreating back. "This may be more difficult than I thought..." He mused.

Hinata looked around for someone less capable of escaping. She noticed off to the side an old man. This elderly person was hunchbacked, wearing outdated, Chinese clothing, and was sitting behind a hastily set-up stall for selling puppets.

"E-excuse me," Hinata said nervously, walking up to the geezer. "Do you..."

"Hello there, young lady," the old timer cut in suddenly, wheezing, "Would you like to buy a puppet?"

"Um, no, you see..."

The old man held up a marionette for all to see. "This is my best one. His name is Painoko." He then held up a ventriloquist dummy, "But if that isn't your style, there's also Motahmah..."

"We don't want your stupid toys!" Naruto burst in- and took a step back when the geezer gave him a stern look.

He glares like Old Man Third...

"Ye-ah," Shikamaru rubbed the back of his head at the awkwardness of the moment. "Look. Do you know where we can a place called, The Turtle?"

"It's right over there." The geezer pointed past Team Naruto. Looking to where he was pointing, the Leaf Ninja saw a somewhat unpleasant-looking building with a sign over the door that said, 'Turtle'. They sweatdropped.

"Ah... Thanks." Shikamaru said.

D A T T E B A Y O

They say you can't judge a book by its cover. Taking that in mind, Team Naruto did their best not to make any preconceptions about the tavern's status. Upon entering, they realized that calling The Turtle a dive would have *elevated* its status ten feet. Making their

way to the bar, the group was painfully aware of the stares they were getting from the patrons.

"WHAT?!" Naruto snarled, annoyed, "If we're that interesting, take a picture- it'll last longer!"

There were several flashes before normal activity in the Turtle resumed. Naruto went up to the bar and ordered lunch. He hadn't anything to eat since leaving the Hidden Leaf Village.

"Hey mister," Shikamaru said while Naruto ate, "We're looking for a Captain Mako, ya know him?"

The barkeep shrugged. "The Cap'n? Sure, I know him. Comes here all the time, looking for someone to take his ship."

"So he hasn't sold it yet?" Hinata asked. She and Sakura exchanged overjoyed looks as the bartender nodded. "That's wonderful!"

"Maybe...anyway, not that it's my business, but why are you so keen on finding Mako, anyway?" the bartender glanced at their headbands. "Does he owe your boss money, or something?"

Lee shook his head. "No, it is nothing like that. We are looking for a ship and-"

"Hey, mister!" Two voices broke in. One belonged to Naruto. The other belonged to an unruly-looking fella. This man looked to be about in his 30s, at least. He was dressed in leather, with jeans and a vest that stayed open to reveal a muscular chest. Every portion of this man's body seemed to be rippling with well-toned muscles. He had black hair that seemed to jut upwards like a ball of fire, and thick mustache that looked like someone had glued several sea urchins just below his nose. Tatoo-ed on his shoulder was a black-and-white bulls-eye.

"This fish tastes..." They both began at the same, but their opinions went in different directions.

"Pretty good." Naruto sighed.

"Pretty bad!" the big man gagged at the same time.

Naruto and the big man then took a swig from their drinks. "But your drinks are..."

"Gonna kill me!" Naruto gagged.

"To die for..." sighed the big man.

Suddenly aware that there was a difference of opinion, Naruto and the big man glared at each other from the corner of their eyes.

"I'll be sure to tell the cook that," the barkeep said, eyeing the two oddly. "But you better take a runner start first."

Naruto and the big man ended the staring contest, though not satisfied.

Shikamaru didn't like the situation at all.

I hope this doesn't come to blows...it would be such a pain to get thrown out.

Hinata was more concerned about her crush. There was something about the big man that made her nervous.

"Hey barkeep," The big man said suddenly, jerking a thumb at Naruto, "Since when do ya let wild animals in here?"

Naruto growled, but forced a big smile on his face. "Yeah, you should call the zoo to see if any of their apes escaped."

The big man shook with rage, but let that comment slide. Instead, he motioned to the bartender and said, "Make me up an order of your stake to go, with some ketchup on the side."

Naruto then waved to the bartender too. "Hey mister, gimme another one of those fish to go, with a double order of mustard."

The big man then said, "Yeah, I'd like to add a thing'a vinegar to that steak."

"And put some guacamole with mine!"

"And some mustard!"

"And some Tabasco sauce!"

All of a sudden, the two whirled at each other, Naruto's sleeves rolled and the big man's fist clench.

"What's *wrong* with you!?" The big man snarled.

"What's wrong with *you* ?!" Naruto hissed.

"What's wrong with *both* of you!?" Sakura yelled, unable to take it anymore.

Neither of them answered her. Instead they continued to glare. The big man then noticed Naruto's headband. "You a ninja?" He asked.

"Yeah," Naruto said.

"What rank?" He continued.

Naruto looked away. " G\$nn... " He grumbled.

"Huh? I didn't catch that."

"Genin! Okay!?" Naruto *hated* the fact that even though he was equal to Kakashi-Sensei, he still had the lowest rank of his peers.

The big man didn't say anything at first. Instead, he grabbed a take-out box that the bartender laid out on the counter. Turning around, he

walked out of the tavern. However, before he was completely out of the door, he muttered, "Liar," loud enough for Naruto to hear.

Who was that guy...? Naruto thought. However, his thinking was interrupted by a chakra-powered fist slamming into his head.

WHACK!

"Ow...Sakura, what was that for?" Naruto whined, clutching his head.

"That's what I wanna know! What's your problem with that guy?" Sakura demanded.

Naruto glanced at the door. "I...dunno. There was something off about him, though..."

Sakura sighed. "You're so weird." She jerked a thumb over her shoulder, where Lee and Shikamaru were seated at a table across from an old man in a sailing uniform. An argument was taking place. "That's Captain Mako," Sakura explained, "While you were messing with that big guy, he came in. Shikamaru and Lee are trying to get him to sell us his ship."

Naruto squinted. "What's wrong? Is he charging too much?"

Sakura shook her head. "No, it's the opposite. He's not charging us a thing."

"Ehh!? Then what's wrong?" Naruto asked.

Sakura sighed. "Lee doesn't think it's right to take his ship without giving him compensation, but the captain won't take a single ryo..."

Naruto shook his head and walked over to the table. "Hey," He said, getting their attention.

"Ah! Naruto! This man..." Lee began, but Naruto cut him off.

"Yeah, Sakura already told me." Naruto looked Captain Mako square in the eye. "Are there any holes in your boat?"

"No," the captain said.

"No termites?" Naruto asked.

"None," the captain said.

"No rats?" Naruto asked.

"Nuh-uh," the captain shook his head.

"No..." Naruto thought for a moment, "No super-weapon that could ultimately tip the balance between good and evil and destroy the world?"

Captain Mako blinked. "What? No!"

Naruto nodded. "Okay, we'll take it."

Captain Mako sighed in relief. "Good. Now just sign these to make it official..."

Captain Mako pulled out some legal papers and gave them to Naruto. Naruto skimmed the text.

"Lessee... 'I hereby bequeath...' yadda yadda... 'For the amount of 0 ryo...' blah blah... 'No way responsible for any...' etc., etc...." Naruto signed his name on the dotted line at the bottom, and Captain did the same.

"Yeah!" Naruto pumped his fist into the air. "Now we got a ship!"

As Captain Mako made his way from the table, Shikamaru took him aside.

"Listen, buddy, is there some big secret about your ship you're not telling us?" The Nara heir asked.

The captain shrugged. "No big secret..." Turning around, he walked out the door.

"It's haunted, that's all."

Oda

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto . Nuff said.

Opening theme: Bon Voyage(4th One Piece opening theme)

Chapter 5: *Oda*

Team Naruto walked out of the Turtle, each with a different expression.

Naruto looked worried.

Lee looked forlorn.

Sakura looked skeptical.

Hinata looked concerned.

And Shikamaru looked resigned.

"Aww... Did it have to be ghosts?" Naruto whined, looking down.

"No wonder he wouldn't take any money," Lee said sadly, "He must have thought any payment would have been unfair on his part."

"M-maybe it's a...friendly ghost?" Hinata asked shyly.

"Oh, c'mon," Sakura said, waving a dismissive hand. "Cheer up! We got a ship for free! Who cares if it's haunted?"

Naruto cared. When you've got an immortal demon resting inside your soul, one tends to be wary of any other spirit that they might come across.

"Besides, most old sailors that age tend to be superstitious," Shikamaru said, "I bet it's just an old tub with some bad history."

"Ahh! There you are!"

The Leaf Ninja looked down to see Kawazaki hopping up to them. They had left the frog at Inari's because, "A talking frog would attract too much attention".

"Did things go splendidly?" Kawazaki asked.

Shikamaru nodded. "We've got a boat."

Kawazaki clapped his webbed hands together. "Wonderful!" He then noticed Naruto's and Lee expressions. "Is there some big secret no one's telling me?"

"No secret," Naruto sighed, "It's just *haunted* , that's all..."

"Oh." Kawazaki puffed his pipe for second. "Well, I can see why you're worried, but I doubt it's anything serious. I'll handle it when the time comes."

Naruto lifted his head slightly. "Really?"

"Certainly! I *am* an acolyte of Mt. Oinari, after all! Just leave that sort of thing to me. Now, to the docks!" And Kawazaki hopped off, followed closely by Team Naruto.

D A T T E B A Y O

Team Naruto arrived at the dock where their new ship was stationed. Vessels of many sizes and styles surrounded them.

"Let's see," Sakura said, looking around, "According to the dock keeper, the...S.S. Kingfish should be 13th on the left."

"Unlucky thirteen..." Muttered Lee.

"Oh, pipe down." Shikamaru groaned, "It'll be fine."

"Oh!" Hinata pointed. "I think that's it!"

Everyone looked to where Hinata was pointing. Sitting at the very end of the dock was their means of arriving at Kaiju Island, the S.S. Kingfish-go. It looked terrible.

"What a tub," Shikamaru commented.

"Oh, so the paint job is sloppy," Kawazaki said, brushing it off.
"That's not important."

"Yeah!" Naruto said, pumping his fist, "This is the ship that's gonna take me to mom! Who cares what it looks like?!" He looked at Kawazaki warily. "It's not haunted, is it?"

Kawazaki shook his head. "No, it isn't."

"All-right then!" Naruto leapt aboard the Kingfish's deck and began to issue orders. "We set sail immediately! Stem the stern! Raise the sails! Batten down the hatches!"

"Naruto, do you have any idea what you're saying?" Sakura asked.

Naruto's face went blank. The other ninja sighed.

"Right," Shikamaru said, rubbing the bridge of his nose, "Next on our agenda is to find someone with sailing experience."

Out of the corner of her eye, Hinata noticed someone a little ways near the entrance of the dock. The man was rugged-looking, wearing a sailing uniform that was torn in several places. He had one eye covered by a patch. He had several scars all over his left arm, and a cutlass strapped over his back.

"Oh, um, excuse me, sir!" Hinata called out to him. The tough turned to look at Hinata, and the rest of Team Naruto looked on.

"A-are you a sailor?" Hinata asked faintly.

The tough gave her a look. "Ja think I'm a samurai?" He asked sarcastically.

Oda: Sailor for hire

"You're hired!" Naruto yelled. "Get up here!"

Oda stared for a moment, shrugged, and made his way towards the Kingfish. As soon as he was on board, Naruto quickly laid down the law.

"Listen, from now on you're a member of the Kingfish's crew! Got that?!" Naruto yelled exuberantly.

Oda looked around. "Who's the captain?" He asked.

"Me!" Naruto grinned.

"EHHHHH!?" Sakura, Lee, and Shikamaru cried.

"Nuts on the high seas," muttered Oda. Shaking his head, he asked, "Where's the rest of the crew?"

"Those guys," Naruto pointed at the other Leaf Ninja.

"EHHHH!?" Sakura, Lee, and Shikamaru cried again.

"Nuts on the high seas," Oda groaned again, shaking his head, "Ya look like a buncha ninja!"

"We are!" Naruto grinned.

Oda sighed. "Do *any* of ya know a thing about sailing?"

"That's what you're here for," Shikamaru said.

Oda suppressed a moan. *Ma said there'd be days like this!*

And so, preparations were made. While Sakura and Lee helped Oda get the Kingfish ready, Naruto, Hinata and Lee went to get supplies for the voyage. (Sakura made Naruto swear not to buy just instant

ramen) After saying goodbye to Inari and his family, the crew of the Kingfish set out.

"What's our heading, Cap'n Uzumaki?" Oda asked from the helm.

"Lemme check." Naruto bent down to Kawazaki, who was sitting on the rail in front of the helm. "Which way?"

"A moment, please." Kawazaki closed his eyes for a moment, and then pointed. "That way, if you will."

"Nuts on the high seas!" cried Oda.

D A T T E B A Y O

Back near the Turtle, the big man Naruto almost fought with was looking at two pictures. One was a photo of Naruto from 3 years ago, the other was one of the photos taken in the bar today. He handed the pics to three others standing near him.

"I thought that kid looked familiar..." the big man said. "I wouldn't have recognized him if it weren't for his whiskers."

"So, what do we do now, boss?" the closest to him asked.

The big man grinned. "We're going after him, of course! I'm not letting a bounty like that just slip away!"

Leader of Team Death: Fuji

As Fuji and the three others walked off, the colorful, belled street performer said, "I believe he is heading to Kaiju Island to the south-east of here. We should catch him before he heads to sea."

Information Specialist of Team Death: Kageo

The masked samurai tapped the ground with a blind man's cane absentmindedly and said, "If we can't catch him before that, we can

just take a boat and head out ourselves. I'll be able to find him soon enough."

Tracker of Team Death: Blind the Buddha(gender unknown)

The old puppet-peddle wheezed and coughed as he struggled to walk alongside his younger companions. "It should hardly matter how far away he is. I'll be sure to close any gap between us... (Hack!)"

Senior Officer of Team Death: Daku

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, on the Kingfish, a small figure crept around...

D A T T E B A Y O

Okay, now that was suspenseful! And this omake is just for D Unkown, the first reader to review! FOLLOW IT'S EXAMPLE!

Omake: NejiTen trouble-

Neji: Tenten, with Lee and Guy-Sensei gone on separate missions, this is a good time for me to ask you something.

Tenten: Yeah?

Neji: Well...it's not something that would be...prudent to ask with Guy-Sensei and Lee around, but...

Tenten: What is it?

Neji: Do you...

Tenten: Yes?

Neji: This is embaessing, but, do you...

Tenten: YES?

Neji: Do you, um...

Tenten: Yes?

Neji: ...Have a last name?

Tenten:

(A cold wind blows through)

Team Death

Kishimoto owns Naruto .

Opening theme: Seishun Kyōsōkyoku(5th opening of Naruto)

Chapter 6: *Team Death*

And so the S.S. Kingfish sailed merrily on its way...

"Nuts on the high seas!"

...though not without complaint from certain swabbies.

"I shoulda stayed ashore," Oda groaned from the ropes he was tightening. "Unemployment's better than this!"

"Hey, what's your problem?" Naruto asked, walking over to the sailor. "You've been complaining ever since we left port! What's wrong?"

Oda gave the container a mean look, captain or not. "What's wrong is that I'm the only swabbie who knows how t'run a ship! It feels like I'm doin' all the work!"

"Hey, we're doing our part," Naruto protested, "'Specially me!" Naruto pointed to where some clones were swabbing the deck. "Besides, you should be thanking me!"

"For what, cap'n?" Oda asked, confused.

"On any other ship, you'd be just another deckhand," Naruto explained, "But here, you're not just the deckhand, you're the consultant, the navigator, *and* the helmsman! That's like having four jobs in one!"

Oda thought about that. Then he said, "In that case, I want the pay a'four men."

"What!?"

Up near the helm, Kawazaki watched the argument with mild amusement.

"Um, Mr. Kawazaki?" A dainty voice said.

Looking up, Kawazaki saw Hinata with a cup in her hands.

"I, I brought you some tea," She said.

Kawazaki took the cup and sipped the drink. "Mm. Thank you, Ms. Hyuuga."

Hinata looked down at Naruto and Oda. "Is something wrong?"

"Nothing serious," Kawazaki explained. "Naruto's trying to convince Mr. Oda there to do the jobs of four people for the pay of one. I'll give him credit if he succeeds."

Meanwhile, Lee was busy doing push-ups. Just because he was at sea did not mean he should slack off from his exercises!

"993...994...995..." Lee grunted. It wasn't easy doing push-ups on a surface that was constantly swaying, but felt he was getting used to it.

THUNK!

Lee paused. What was that sound? It sounded like someone moving around the inside of the ship. But who?

Naruto and Oda were talking(Arguing).

Hinata and Mr. Kawazaki were having tea near the helm.

Shikamaru was...sleeping.

And Sakura was-

"Why stop, Lee?" Sakura asked out of the blue.

Lee lost his balance and fell over. "Sa...Sakura! What have you been doing?"

"I just sent a message to Lady Tsunade by carrier pigeon," Sakura explained, pointing over her shoulder. "She should know what's going on right now."

"Hmm," Lee stood up and looked at her. "Were you just inside?"

"No, I was just about to go inside," Sakura said, "Why?"

Lee took on a determined expression. "Cover me," Was all he said. Without another word, he marched into the cabin. There was the sounds of a scuffle, and Lee's voice floated out.

"Look who I found..."

Lee walked out, pulling *Inari* out!

Sakura blanched. "Inari!"

"Huh?" Naruto turned away from his negotiations to see what all the fuss was about. "What's going on- Inari!?"

Pretty soon, everyone was gathered around the Wave boy.

"What are you doing here, Inari?" Sakura asked.

"I wanted to come," Inari said sullenly.

"But it's too dangerous," Sakura said, "This isn't an ordinary trip we're taking. We're going somewhere with monsters. It's too much for someone your age."

"I don't care!" Inari shot back angrily, "I'm coming!"

Sakura sighed. "Mr. Oda, could you turn us around? We're taking Inari back to his family."

"Wait." Naruto said. He had remained silent the entire time. Storm clouds were gathering above in the meantime.

"Inari," Naruto said, "Why do think you need to come?"

"Because..." Inari began, "Because I wanted to help you find your mom! You saved my mom!"

Naruto didn't say anything.

Inari continued. "When you told us how much you wanted to meet your mom, I knew I had to help... After all, aren't we *Nakama* ?!"

Naruto stared. Then he smiled. "Okay, welcome aboard."

"Naruto!" Sakura cried.

"Naruto," Shikamaru said calmly, "This mission is dangerous enough. Do you think it's really a good idea to let someone with no combat experience tag along?" He nodded toward's Oda. "Even Oda here's probably been through a scrap or two... *Is it really okay ?*"

Naruto gave his trademark smirk. "Sure! You guys just haven't seen what Inari could do. Besides, none of my teammates die when I'm around!"

Hinata gazed at Naruto lovingly as Sakura and Shikamaru sighed.

Naruto... You're so amazing...

D A T T E B A Y O

Later on, the skies had darkened and the winds had picked up. Oda had taken the helm and was doing his best to keep the Kingfish level. And then it started to rain.

"Man, where'd this storm come from?!" Naruto cried in frustration, "It was clear a minute ago!"

"We can only hope it doesn't get any worse," Lee gasped, trying to keep his balance. The ship was swaying more than usual, and unlike his teammates, he did not have the chakra-molding abilities to hold himself to the deck.

Shikamaru then noticed something. "Hey, Hinata! Can you use your Byakugan to check out what's behind us?"

"Let me see," Hinata said, and activated her Kekkai Genkai. With it she was able to see...

"It's a ship!" She cried.

Before anyone could react to that, the Kingfish suddenly shook- like an invisible force grabbed the boat, stopping it in its tracks. The force of it had thrown everyone from their posts.

"Nuts on the high seas!" Oda cried, struggling to get up, "What hit us?!"

The Kingfish began to shudder, as if it was being pulled against the wind. Hinata saw with her Byakugan a string of chakra, like the kind the Sand Ninja used in their puppet techniques.

But that chakra looks so thick...!

"Hey! Uzumaki Naruto!"

The ship(Though it was more like a raft) Hinata saw was now in plain sight, and on it were the four people Naruto saw in the Land of Waves. Blind The Buddha was at the back, steering the rudder. Fuji and Kageo were standing at the front of the ship. Daku the peddler had his arm reaching out and his hand opened wide as if to grab something.

Hinata gasped. *The chakra strings are coming from him!*

Fuji sneered, and pointed at Naruto. "We've been looking all over for you, fox-face! There're some guys who wanna see you, so come with us!"

"It's that guy from The Turtle," Sakura said, "But what does he want?"

Inari had a flash of realization. "Bro! It's that bell guy we saw!"

"Yeah, and I think I saw that masked guy," Naruto said, trying to figure out the situation.

Are those guys working for Akatsuki?!

"Now, c'mon!" Fuji yelled again, "We haven't got all day! A certain organization wants to talk to you about the death of their founder, so let's hurry it up!"

Naruto tried to calm himself down. What was this bad feeling he had...? "I'm too busy to mess around with you guys or anyone else! So beat it!" he yelled.

"So it's like that, huh?" Fuji muttered, "Ah, well, works either way..."

Without another word, Fuji took a flying leap off his ship, and onto the Kingfish's deck. (The force of his landing caused the boat to shake even more!) Before Naruto could react, he felt a inhumanly strong punch strike his stomach, and he went sailing into the cabin with a crash.

"Nuts on the high seas!" Oda yelled, "What's going on?! Cap'n? Cap'n!?"

"You keep the ship steady, Mr. Oda," Kawazaki said, hopping down, "I'm going to see what I can do!"

On the deck, Fuji adjusted his neck. "Aww, I over did it. Now I'm gonna hafta go inside to get him," Fuji began to move forward and then froze. "Huh?"

Shikamaru grinned. The Shadow Possession Technique had succeeded. "Now, Lee!"

"Right!" Lee leapt at Fuji, swinging his leg around in a roundhouse kick. " *Leaf Hurricane!* "

Fuji looked shocked for a moment, then smirked. A mere moment away from Lee's kick connecting did he suddenly bring up his arm, blocking it. Lee fell to the deck, clutching his leg, while Shikamaru fell clutching his arm. Fuji appeared unaffected.

"M-my leg...!" Lee groaned in agony.

Shikamaru tried to make out what had happened, regardless of how much pain he was in, mentally and physically.

That lummox overpowered my technique to the point that I became his victim...! And to take Lee's kick without feeling a thing...is he even human?!

Fuji looked down at them and smiled a devil's smile. "You two wanna mix it up, huh?"

Meanwhile, Sakura had jumped from the Kignfish onto Fuji's boat. *If I can just sink their ship, She thought, We'll only have that big guy to worry about!* Raising her fist, she began to concentrate all of her chakra into the blow. *One punch ought to do it...*

Before Sakura could follow through, however, Blind leapt from its post and swung its cane down at her. Sakura jumped aside, just avoiding the blow- and then her arms went limp.

What the-? What happened?! She thought in a panic.

"It seems you fell to Blind's special technique," A soft voice said behind her.

Whirling around, Sakura saw Kageo standing behind her, looking as innocent as a newborn.

How did he get there without my noticing it!? Sakura couldn't figure it out. Even in the storm, she should have heard one of those bells...

Meanwhile, Hinata had positioned herself so that she was in striking range of the chakra thread coming out from Daku.

"I hope this works..." Hinata said. And it should. The Gentle Fist fighting style used chakra, so breaking the chakra thread was going to be easy, wasn't it? However, when Hinata swung her hand down, she couldn't cut through the thread! She tried again, and again, with no more success than before.

What?! It won't break? How? In desperation, Hinata looked at Daku. *It's that old peddler...I need to do something about him...*

Back on deck, Inari watched in horror as both Shikamaru and Lee fell before Fuji.

"Wha...What do I do?" Inari asked himself in a panic.

"Now, for Naruto." Fuji began to walk towards the cabin when Kawazaki hopped in front of him.

"Hello." Kawazaki said.

Fuji blinked in surprise. "A talking frog."

Kawazaki didn't say anything else. Instead, he maneuvered his pipe so that the end the smoke comes out of was pointing at Fuji. Then, he blew into it as hard as he can. With the sound of a steam whistle, a blast of steam shot out of the pipe, directly into Fuji's face!

"Argh!" Fuji cried, slapping a hand over his eyes, stepping back. Then the cabin swung open and Naruto charged out, a Rasengan in hand.

"Take this!" Naruto yelled, slamming the sphere into Fuji's chest. Fuji went flying, spinning into the mast of his ship, causing it to break in two from the force. At the same time, two clones of Naruto leapt up

and pull Sakura off and onto the Kingfish. The mast falling distracted Daku from his hold on the Kingfish, which was more than enough for Hinata to snap the chakra string apart with her Gentle Fist. As if it was released from a slingshot, the Kingfish sprang forward, bouncing across the water so much that by the time it stopped, Team Death was well out of sight.

"Who were those people?" Kawazaki asked, bewildered.

D A T T E B A Y O

"There's no way we can catch up with him now," Kageo said simply. "Not with the mast like this."

Daku sighed, coughed, then wheezed. "I shouldn't have lost control so easily, I'm sorry."

Fuji waved. "Forget it. We'll get him next time."

"But if he's going to Kaiju Island, there won't be a next time," Blind said, "We can't collect on a head we didn't kill ourselves, and nobody comes back from that place alive."

"Naw, he won't die," Fuji said, smirking, "That kid has too much spirit for that. I almost feel sorry for those monsters..."

D A T T E B A Y O

Nakama means comrade, someone closer than a friend. I think.

Tails of the Past

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto

Opening theme: Hikari E(3rd opening theme of One Piece)

Chapter 7: *Tails of the Past*

The morning following Team Death's attack on the Kingfish, the crew was busy recuperating. Inari was proving his worth by using his carpentry skills to repair the damage to the ship. Oda was manning the helm, and Team Naruto was discussing their attackers.

"I wonder how those people found us all the way out here," Lee said, rubbing his arm. Sakura had healed it with her medical Ninjutsu, but it was still sore in spots. "We had lost sight of the Land of Waves long before they came."

"I wish we had an idea why came after us," Hinata said. Last night's attack had her a little nervous.

"It sounded like they were after the Cap'n," Oda said.

"Are they enemies you made, bro?" Inari asked, hammering a board in.

"I never met any of them before last night," Naruto said, "Why were they after me?" They didn't *dress* like the Akatsuki, so they weren't after the Nine-Tail Fox Spirit...or were they?

"If I were to take a guess," Shikamaru said, "I'd say they were bounty hunters."

Everyone looked at Shikamaru in surprise.

"Bounty hunters?" Sakura asked, "What makes you say that?"

"After Asuma-Sensei was killed, I began to check around," Shikamaru began, "I wanted to know how many of the Hidden Leaf Shinobi have bounties on their heads. So we could have some kind of warning ahead of time. And it turns out that not only did Asuma-Sensei had a bounty, but so does Kakashi-Sensei, Guy-Sensei," Shikamaru gave Naruto a hard look. "And you, posted by a criminal organization."

"Well," Kawazaki said, "I doubt we will have to worry about any bounty hunters where we're going. This reminds me, Naruto. Now is as good a time as any to deal with a monster much closer to home."

Lee looked confused. "What? Are there any monsters on board? Or are you talking about a sea monster, Mr. Kawazaki?"

"No, he's not." Naruto said, his head lowered so his eyes couldn't be seen. He knew this was coming. He knew it was coming but had put it off. But no more. Naruto looked up, his eyes harder than anyone was used to seeing. "What do you guys know about the Nine-Tailed Fox?"

"It-it was a horrible demon that attacked the Village, killing many people," Hinata answered.

Lee continued for her, "The 4th Hokage destroyed the Fox, by means of a forbidden technique, sacrificing his life in the process."

"But that's not the whole story, is it?" Shikamaru asked, having a pretty good idea where this was going.

Naruto shook his head. "No, it's not. The Fourth couldn't kill the Nine-Tails entirely. Instead, he sealed inside a baby born on that day," Naruto began to take off his shirt. "Me."

His chest now bare, Naruto focused his chakra. On his stomach did the 4th Hokage's seal appear.

Lee and Hinata gasped, Shikamaru said nothing, but merely stared at the seal, as if he was committing it to memory. Sakura looked on sadly, having heard it before.

Inari looked utterly flabbergasted. "So...there's a monster *inside* of you?" He asked.

Naruto nodded.

Shikamaru sighed. "I figured as much." Everyone looked at him. "Three years ago, at the hospital, you told Gaara there was a monster inside of you. Then during your match with Neji, you unleashed some weird chakra. That was the Fox's power wasn't it?"

Naruto was amazed. "Wow...You figured it out from just *that* ?"

"Plus," Continued Shikamaru, "You're being targeted by Akatsuki, and Akatsuki is targeting people with demons within them...like Gaara."

"Ohh!" Lee cried, smacking his fist into his palm, "Of course! That's why Akatsuki is hunting you!" Lee then looked curious. "But does anyone else know about this? About you, Naruto?"

"Sure," Naruto muttered scornfully, "Everyone who was around that day knows. Why do you think all those old (&#s hate me so much? To them I'm no better than that stupid Fox."

Suddenly Hinata had Naruto in a hug. "I'm so sorry..." She whispered, tears streaming down her face. Images of watching Naruto sad childhood flashed through her mind. "I had no idea how bad it was..."

Naruto was a bit surprised by this, but not ungrateful. He patted her back. "It...It's okay. It's not your fault... Thanks." Naruto looked around, trying to figure out what to do next.

Lee gave him a thumbs-up. " We know you're not the Fox. So you should not worry about those old ones! Just ignore them!"

Naruto grinned at Lee enthusiasm. "Don't worry, I have."

"Hold on," Oda spoke up, looking as confused as a sailor ever was. "Th' Hokage's the strongest guy in yer village, right? Town champ, an' all that, right? If he sealed this thing in ya, why do we need ta 'take care of it'?"

"I will explain that," Kawazaki said. He separated Hinata from Naruto. "Step away please. The seal operates on a combination contain/fuse principal. That is, while most of the Fox's chakra is sealed in a pocket dimension in Naruto's soul, a small amount leaks through, constantly being added to Naruto's own supply."

That explains while Naruto stunk so much at the academy, Shikamaru thought, He was subconsciously suppressing most of the Fox's power, only allowing a tiny bit to get through. He couldn't perform any techniques because he was too busy holding down the demon.

Kawazaki continued. "The seal maintains this balance, very much like how a dam separates a river from the rest of a valley, letting only manageable amount through. However!" Kawazaki tapped a very faint burn mark on Naruto's abdomen. "The seal has been tampered with! This is causing too much of the Fox's chakra to go into Naruto, more than he can handle, or survive. If actions are not taken, the Fox's power will overpower Naruto, killing him."

Everyone gasped, and Sakura had a vision of Naruto going into the 4-tail state, then 5 tails, then 6, 7, 8, and then... She stopped that train of thought right then and there.

"Isn't there anything we can do?!" Inari asked in a panic.

"No," Kawazaki said calmly, "But that's what I'm here for." He took off his hat and placed his pipe aside. "I am going to do what I can to

repair the seal so it doesn't happen."

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

"That's good to hear," Sakura said.

But Kawazaki had more to say. "But, after this, I want you to never call upon the Fox's power again. And if you absolutely must, only use a small margin. Do not enter a tailed state!"

Naruto nodded. "Don't worry, I won't." He smiled that Naruto smile. "Besides, I'm so strong now I don't need that stupid fox!"

Kawazaki smiled as well. "That's good to hear. Now lie down so I can get to work."

D A T T E B A Y O

"What did you say?" Kakashi asked Tsunade, popeyed. Yamato stood beside him, not showing too much surprise, to his credit.

"Uzumaki Kushina is alive. And Naruto's going to find her." Tsunade said, doing her best not to enjoy Kakashi's face.

Kakashi took a step back, effectively floored. "Ms. Kushina...alive, after all this time. How could that be?"

"That's why I called you two in here," Tsunade said, "You two are the only ones I can trust on this matter." She waved a folder in her hands. "According to this report from the Leaf Military Police Corps, on the day Kushina was reported dead, four rogue members of the Uchiha Clan attempted to kill Naruto...but failed, because Kushina fought them."

"Four allegedly rogue Uchihas," Yamato said, and Tsunade and Kakashi looked at him questioningly. "Kushina... After the Fox's attack, a gap between her and the rest of the Village formed. She loved Naruto the way only a mother can, and the Village...you know."

Tsunade closed her eyes for a moment. "They hated him like poison. I can see why that would make things tense for Kushina. When Minato died, he was all she had left. But what does that have to do with the Uchiha Clan?"

Yamato continued. "In the first days after the Fox's attack, there was much debate on what to do with Naruto. While most wanted to have him killed, and 'finish what the 4th Lord started', others were pushing for him to be trained as secret weapon for the Village. One of those was Uchiha Fugaku."

Tsunade smirked. "I bet Kushina didn't like that."

"She hospitalized the most of the counsel, save the 3rd Hokage," Kakashi said dryly, ("That's how Danzo lost his arm," put in Yamato) "After that, there was no more talk about Naruto's future. No one wanted to antagonize Kushina." A thought occurred to him. "I see where you're going with this, Tenzo. You think Fugaku orchestrated the incident to kill Kushina and take Naruto."

"Yes, sir." Yamato replied. "Except it didn't work. What should have been a quiet assassination snowballed into an uproar not seen after the Fox's attack one year before. Kushina supposedly died, and so did her assailants soon after from mortal wounds she caused them. In theory..."

"Speculation aside," Tsunade said, "None of that explains how Kushina could be alive, unless... Kakashi!"

The Copy Ninja stood to attention. "Yes, ma'am?"

"That space-time technique you used on the mission to rescue the Kazekage, is it unique to the Mangekyou Sharingan? Or can it be done by the regular Sharingan?"

Kakashi thought for a moment, and gave the Princess a helpless shrug. "I don't know. I learned a few things about the Sharingan from the Uchiha Clan after what happened to Obito, but I've always felt as

though they've held out on me. I certainly didn't know about the Mangekyou Sharingan until after I fought Itachi three years ago."

Tsunade thought for a moment before speaking. "I think...that when those Uchihas attacked Kushina, they found she was too powerful, too impossibly strong to be killed outright. So, they might have used a space-time technique to send her away, and then lied to everyone that she was died."

"But where could she be sent to?" Kakashi asked, "She wouldn't let anyone- or anything- keep her away from Naruto."

"That's what worries me." Tsunade replied. "I got received a message from Sakura on their progress- and where Kushina is. What kind of place is it to hold Kushina... What is Kaiju Island...?"

D A T T E B A Y O

Two weeks later, Oda's voice rang all about the Kingfish.

"Laaannnd ho!"

They were now at the place of nightmares made real...Kaiju Island, the Land of Monsters.

Ozaru

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto

Opening theme: Cha-La Head-Cha-La(1st opening theme of Dragon Ball Z)

Chapter 8: *Ozaru*

The Kingfish arrived at the coast of Kaiju Island, landing at a desolate beach. About twenty yards away they could see the entrance to a jungle of sorts. The skeletons of what used to be odd-looking creatures littered the sand.

"Ohh, I don't like the looks a'this," muttered Oda, looking everywhere with his good eye. Suddenly there was a sound of some bird cawing.

"I hope that was a seagull," Hinata commented uneasily.

Naruto, however, was undeterred by the uncivilized look of the place, or the strange sounds of the native wildlife. "All right, everybody!" He called out, "Let's move!"

He was about to charge off when Shikamaru called out to him.

"Hold it!" Shikamaru yelled, "Do you have any kind of plan for this?"

"Sure I do!" Naruto boasted. He picked up Kawazaki("Hmm?") and held him up for all to see. "Kawazaki here will tell me where to go, and we'll go there!"

"In other words, you have no plan at all." Shikamaru sighed. He knew Tsunade had him come to do Naruto's thinking as well as his own. "All right, would sit still while I iron out a few details?"

Naruto looked annoyed that he was supposed to not move when he was(In his mind) so close, but decided to let Shikamaru do his thing.

"All right," Shikamaru began, "The five of us ninja are going to proceed in a single line formation. Naruto, you'll be in front with Kawazaki. Your clones can provide us with a few distractions as well as keep him safe. I'll be directly behind you in order to support with my Shadow-Bind Techniques. Lee, I want you in the middle. Out of all of us, you have the best reflexes, and your speed and position will allow you to go to anyone's aid. Hinata, you'll be last in line, acting as lookout. Your Byakugan will be good to keep an out for any trouble. And Sakura, you're our striker. With your strength, you can end any fight you want. The rest of us will give you an opening, and well, you should know what to do." Shikamaru turned to Inari and Oda. "You two should stay here with the ship; get it ready. I want to be able to leave whenever. Got it?"

Inari nodded, tightlipped, while Oda saluted. Satisfied, Shikamaru turned back to Naruto. "Okay, whenever you're ready, 'Captain.'"

"I've been ready since we got here." Naruto unzipped his jacket and began to stuff Kawazaki inside.

"Excuse me!? What are you doing? Stop that!" protested Kawazaki, as he struggled to get free.

"I don't wanna lose track of you in case something goes wrong," Explained Naruto, "This way, you'll be with us no matter what happens."

Kawazaki pulled himself out of Naruto's jacket and climbed onto the teen's head. "As touching as your concern is, I'll think I'll be safer up here. That way, I can get away quickly if danger shows up!"

Spineless toad, everyone thought.

Ignoring Kawazaki, Naruo tightened his headband. He waved to Inari and Oda. "Take care, guys! Team Naruto, move out!"

Kawazaki concentrated for a moment, then pointed into the jungle. Without another word, the Leaf Ninja sped off into the foliage,

leaving the boy and the sailor alone with the ship.

"I hope th' cap'n 'ill be okay," Oda commented.

"Bro'll be fine," Inari replied confidently. He then saw something in the sky. "Hey, Oda. Look-"

"Look? Look at what? Where???" Oda began looking this way and that. While his head was turned in one direction, a huge flying lizard came in from the *other* direction, snatching him up in its claws!

"...Out." Inari finished weakly.

"It's one word!" screamed Oda from his captor's grip. " *Lookout!* "

"Uh, uh, I'm coming, Oda!" Inari yelled, giving chase.

D A T T E B A Y O

As Team Naruto zipped through the jungles, they met with surprisingly little trouble. Hinata's Byakugan, as Shikamaru predicted, allowed them to sidestep any monsters without problems. That didn't mean there weren't any, though...

"Naruto, look out!" Hinata cried, and Naruto leapt to the side to avoid being bitten by some kind of giant flytrap plant.

"Aren't we going a trifle fast?" Kawazaki asked, clinging to Naruto's hair. "We're liable to run into problems if we rush!"

"But if we slow down," Lee asked, "Wouldn't that make us a target for some beast? We've only gotten so far this fast is because of our speed and Hinata-"

Hinata then gave a slight gasp of horror.

"What's wrong?" Sakura asked.

"T-there's this giant...monkey...thing...to the east of us," She explained, looking a little pale. "It's huge!"

"Forget it!" Naruto yelled, "If it's not in our way, it's not our problem!"

"Oh... Oh dear!" Kawazaki cried suddenly.

"What is it?" Shikamaru asked, not liking the sound of that.

"Kushina's moving! And fast!" Kawazaki answered. "She's now to... the...east."

There was an unhealthy pause as Team Naruto took that in.

"East, huh?" Naruto muttered. "Then let's move!"

As Naruto zipped off in that direction, Sakura nearly slapped herself in frustration. "That...idiot! Didn't he hear about the giant monkey?"

Shikamaru suppressed a smirk. "You know Naruto. In one ear, out the other. We better move if we wanna stay with him."

And so Team Shikamaru II took after their team Maverick.

D A T T E B A Y O

By the time Team Shikamaru II caught up with Naruto, he was standing on lumpy hill covered in dead grass.

"Hey, glad you could catch up." Naruto said casually. "What kept you?"

Wham!

"If hadn't charged off like that, we wouldn't need to catch up!" Sakura snarled, peeved.

"Owwie," Naruto muttered, rubbing the bump on his head.

"Excuse me, Miss Hyuuga," Kawazaki said from Naruto's shoulders, "But didn't you say there was a giant simian in the vicinity?"

"Yes..." Whimpered Hinata, "And we're standing on it!"

"What?"

Shikamaru was the first to realize that the 'lumpy hill' was actually a gigantic, hairy body! However, before he could alert his comrades to this fact, the creature leapt up from its sleep, throwing everyone in different. It was then that the Leaf Ninja got their first good look at a monster of Kaiju Island.

Giant Primate Monster: Ozaru

Standing little over fifty stories, Ozaru resembled less of an monkey than it did a giant ape that had a tail. Roaring furiously, Ozaru's first act of business was to grab Naruto, who was too stunned to react quickly enough.

"NARUTO!" Sakura screamed in horror. She and Hinata leapt at Ozaru to Naruto's aid, but the monster whacked them with its tail, sending them flying into the distance.

"Sakura!" Lee cried. However, before he could do anything, Ozaru slammed its other fist onto him and Shikamaru, smashing them into the ground.

"No!" Naruto cried in terror. "You...you...you monster! What was that for!?" Naruto gave cry of pain as Ozaru squeezed even tighter. Then, bored with its captive, Ozaru flung Naruto into another direction, away from where he whipped the girls with his tail. Roaring victoriously, Ozaru stomped off.

From under a pile of rocks, Kawazaki stared out at the monster. "N-now what do I do...?"

Octagon

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto

Opening theme: Rocks(1st opening of Naruto)

Chapter 9: *Octagon*

In small little plain on a harmless-looking island, Kawazaki was busy fretting about.

This is bad, He thought, hopping back and forth. The other's are no real loss, but I can't face Kushina or Tsunade if something were to happen to Naruto! He stopped, and began to take deep breaths. Calm down, I all need to do is search out for their chakra with my 6 th sense, there's no proof that they're dead...yet.

Kawazaki closed his eyes and began to concentrate, feeling out for Team Naruto with his mind. After a minute, he hopped up from his seat. "Good heavens! They're alive! All of them! Thank goodness!" He cried.

But they're scattered across the island, He thought. Which one do I go after? And we still need to find Kushina...

"Kushina! That's it!" Kawazaki began to do a little dance of excitement. "I'll find her, take her to Naruto, and then we'll find the rest of them and leave this awful place! I'm a genius!"

With that strategy made, Kawazaki began to hop off.

D A T T E B A Y O

When Sakura woke up, she found herself staring directly into Hinata's eyes.

"Hi..Hinata?" She asked, groggily. She tried to get up- and fell back down, wincing.

"Don't move," Hinata said, holding her still. She had her Byakugan active. "Your left leg is broken."

"Is...that it?" Sakura asked, weakly. Reaching for that leg, Sakura began to apply medical Ninjutsu. "Where are we?" She asked.

"I don't know," Hinata admitted. "That giant monkey knocked us here with its tail, we could be anywhere on the island. But I do know, is that we're trapped."

Sakura looked around and saw that she and Hinata were on a small island in the middle of a lake.

"That's all?" She asked, relieved. "This is nothing! All we need to do is the walking-on-water technique..." She noticed the upset look on Hinata's face. "It's worse, isn't it?"

Nodding, Hinata picked up a large rock and flung it into the lake. The second the stone hit the water's surface did some... *thing* with huge jaws began snapping at it, splashing water everywhere.

"Those things are everywhere," Hinata explained, "They're waiting for us to try and leave. If we go on the water or in it..." She trailed off sadly.

Sakura frowned. Things did not look good.

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, Lee and Shikamaru were walking down an underground cavern.

"We certainly are lucky." Lee commented.

"Tell me about it," Shikamaru replied. "If it wasn't for that hole in the ground, the ape's punch would have flattened us." He then winced,

feeling a sharp pain in his body.

"Do you think we'll be able to find an exit this way?" Lee asked.

"It's either that, or go back up and fight that monkey," Shikamaru answered. He took this moment to observe the surroundings. Do to a type of luminescent moss covering the walls and ceiling of the cavern, there was plenty of light to see with.

"I just hope we can get back to the surface without running into another freak." Shikamaru said at last. He was starting to understand why Asuma smoked so much.

A little bit later they exited the tunnel into a much larger cavern. The room was so huge that it could have fit three Ozarus, with plenty of space above.

"Say, did the ground get soft all of a sudden?" Lee asked.

Suddenly, there was an ominous growling noise, and a huge tentacle, the size and length of one of Orochimaru's snakes lunged out of the darkness for them!

"Look out!" Lee cried, and the two of them dived away. However, three more tentacles sprang out! Jumping around to avoid being snared, Shikamaru fell off of the elevated area they were on. As he fell, he realized that they were standing on a giant octopus!

Super-sized Cephalopod: Octogon

Shikamaru felt a cold sweat as the monster's eyes beaded down on him. "You gotta be kidding me..." He muttered as four more tentacles came at him.

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, Inari continued to chase the flying monster that had Oda. Luckily the winged creature didn't seem to be in a very large hurry; otherwise he would have lost sight of the sailor by now.

"Fer cryin' out loud!" Inari muttered, "Doesn't that thing have a nest!?"

Oda, meanwhile, seemed to be quite resigned to his fate, mindless humming an old chantey as he felt the flying monster flap its wings.

"Put 'im in the longboat till he's sober..." He muttered. "Early in the mourning..."

He then felt the monster shake, and then plummet as the wings stopped flapping.

"Hey! What the-?!" Was all Oda could say before the inevitable happened.

CRASH!

"Oda! You okay!" Inari cried, rushing to him.

"...Jus' dandy." Oda muttered from under the monster. After being pulled out by Inari, Oda began to examine the creature. He discovered the sharp end of a crude spear poking out of the beast's stomach.

"Nuts on the high seas," Oda muttered. "Who coulda done this?"

There was a sound of a twig snapping, causing Inari and Oda to whirl around. Standing directly behind them, bearing another spear like the one in the monster, was a very imposing figure...

D A T T E B A Y O

In another forest, far away from where Ozaru had flung him, Naruto laid unmoving in the grass. In the depths of his soul, dreaming of the mother he never knew, he could barely hear the Fox's voice...

This Is QultE a PIAcE yOu'Ve BrOuGhT uS tO, iSn'T iT, NArUtO?

Maroga

Kishimoto owns Naruto

Opening theme: Giniro no Sora(3rd opening of Gintama)

Chapter 10: *Maroga*

Straining, Naruto slowly opened his eyes. Getting up, Naruto looked around, taking in his surroundings.

"What...What happened?" Naruto murmured.

-Bored with its captive, Ozaru flung Naruto into another direction-

"Oh yeah... that monkey threw me here..." Naruto muttered, trying to get his bearings. Straightening, Naruto tightened his headband.

"Well, I'm still alive, I can still do this! Let's go!"

Naruto then realized that he was alone.

Oh... That's right. That stupid ape got rid of the others... I hope they're okay.

Naruto then faced a dilemma. Either he could continue searching for his mother, or he could search for his teammates. Normally, a person would be forced to chose one option out of the two, but Naruto's specialty made choosing both possible.

Let's see, Naruto thought, looking around, I could make a hundred clones and search the whole island, but I need to conserve what I've got in case I run into another monster, so... Naruto began to check each direction. "East, west, north, south..." He muttered, "Northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest... I need seven extra mes." He decided, making the hand signs.

Shadow-Clone Technique!

There were several explosions of smoke, and when the dust cleared, there were seven extra Narutos.

"Okay, men!" Naruto ordered, "I'm going east to find mom! Each of you go in a different direction and look for everyone!"

"Right!" The clones replied, and zipped off. Nodding, Naruto went off as well.

D A T T E B A Y O

Elsewhere, in a cave by a burning fire, Inari and Oda ate some cooked monster meat. Across from them, on the other side of the campfire, their host viciously gnawed at her own roasted steak ala' monster. The boy and sailor eyed her cautiously.

The person was a woman, wearing worn-out, outdated clothing. She wore a tattered sash around her hair, preventing them from seeing her hair color. She also had very mean eyes.

"Um..." Inari began to say, "Thanks for saving us."

The woman grunted.

"So..." Oda made his try at conversation. "How long have ya been here?"

The woman stopped eating. After a minute, she said, "Too long." And went back to devouring her meat.

"Uh, wouldn't you like to leave?" Inari asked cautiously. He remembered what his grandfather had said about Kaiju Island.

" Back when I was a brat, there was a place used a banishing point for the most dangerous super-criminals; guys so evil and dangerous that death alone wasn't a fitting punishment for them. These villains were exiled on a remote island to the south-west, rumored to be covered in the most vicious creatures that nature could come up with. Things too horrible to be called mere animals."

The woman gave Inari a cold stare. "No." She said firmly.

"Why not?" Inari cried incredulously. "If it's because you were banished her, Bro won't mind! He's a super cool ninja from the Leaf Village-!"

That was as far as Inari got before a stripped-clean bone sailed past him, crashing against the cave wall.

"I" She snarled, " *hate* Leaf Ninja!" Replacing the coldness in her eyes, her entire face was lighted up with a terrible heat. "Those filthy, worthless, sons of B & \$s stuck on this god-forsaken island and killed my son!"

Inari and Oda stared as she inexplicitly burst into tears.

"My son!" She wailed. "My sooooooon!"

As she sobbed, Oda took hold of Inari's arm and backed out of the cave.

"Well... Sorry t'hear that." Oda said, then whispered to Inari, "Let's beat it. She's busy."

As they left the cave, Inari took one look back at the woman. She was now curled up in a ball, shedding tears at high speed.

Inari looked away sadly, understanding her completely.

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, with Team Shika-Lee, they were still trying to avoid being caught by Octogon's tentacles. While Lee used his fast reflexes and superhuman speed to stay out of its reach, Shikamaru used his shadow-manipulations to shield himself from the tentacles. All the while, the lazy, complaining genius was busy trying to figure out a plan for neutralizing the monster octopus.

That thing doesn't seem to move, relying on its tentacles. Shikamaru thought, creating another shadow-tendrill to divert another incoming tentacle. So all we need to do is take those tentacles out of action. But there's the matter of leaving the cave...I didn't see any exits, so that thing must have its own way of entering...!

Shikamaru was cut off from his thoughts when Lee's weights landed at his feet.

"Hold those for me!" Lee yelled. No longer being slowed down by his leg weights, Lee began to move at even higher speed, so much so that the tentacles couldn't keep up. Before Shikamaru could figure out what had happened, the tentacles had become tangled up in themselves.

"How do you like that!?" Lee asked, landing besides him. Shikamaru blinked.

"Okay...that works... I guess." Shikamaru said, leaning back. *It's simple to the point of stupidity, but I guess if it works-* Shikamaru suddenly fell back. The 'wall' he was leaning against was actually an exit to another tunnel, covered by a type of 'hanging moss'.

Hanging Moss; a type of fungus that hangs beneath the surfaces of stone

"Excellent, Shikamaru!" Lee gave him a thumbs-up. "I knew you would find the way out!"

D A T T E B A Y O

As Naruto bounded through the island's landscape, he suddenly felt the ground begin to shake.

Now what? Naruto thought. Then, a massive wolf bounded out from behind some bushes! But this was no ordinary-looking wolf. In addition to its size, it also had more teeth than a shark, a wild mane,

very much like a lion's, and it's fur color was a variety of reds. It howled, and lunged at Naruto.

Evil Wolf Demon: Maroga

"Jeez!" Naruto yelled, diving to the side, "Doesn't this place have any *normal* animals!?"

As Maroga landed, it spun on its paws and made another lunge at Naruto. Naruto quickly created a shadow-clone that pulled him out of Maroga's path. Landing on the ground, Naruto and Maroga faced each other.

"So, ya wanna fight, huh?" Naruto asked the monster, who growled in response. "Well, you got lousy timing. I'm in a *very* bad mood!"

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, on their little island, Team Saku-Hina prepared for a mad dash. Sakura was healed now, so all they needed to do was move.

"We've only got one shot at this!" Sakura declared, "You ready?"

Hinata nodded. "Ready!"

Baguzi

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto

Opening theme: Heros Come Back! (1st opening theme of Naruto Shippuden)

Chapter 11: *Baguzi*

Picking up a rock, Sakura began her wind-up. "As soon as this hits the water, we run, got it?"

Sakura's plan was simple. While the shark-monsters went at the stone, she and Hinata would charge across the lake, using the walking-on-water technique.

Hinata nodded. "All right. But, Sakura, can I make a suggestion?" She asked, "Instead of simply tossing the rock in, could you throw it in, at 200 meters," She pointed, "That way?"

Sakura looked confused. Hinata continued. "W-well, I can see with my Byakugan that the largest water-monster is over there. If you can take it out with your strength..." She trailed off.

Sakura picked up on what the plan. "The other monsters will be too busy eating it to attack us! That's great!"

Bracing herself and following Hinata's directions, Sakura heaved the rock, which was no bigger than her fist, into the water. The projectile hit the lake with all the impact of a cannonball. A moment later a large, aquatic creature floated to the surface with a large bump in its head. Other shadows began to swarm around it and large jaws from below started rip at its flesh.

"Now!" Sakura yelled, and the two girls began racing across the water. At first, it seemed as if their decoy plan had worked. But suddenly, a monster leapt out of the water at them! The girls didn't

scream to their credit, but they were *very* thrown off. Dodging to the side, Sakura followed up with a punch that sent the creature reeling. No sooner did she that another creature leapt at Hinata!

Heavenly Spin!

Hinata spun around emitting chakra, repelling the monster. However, more soon followed it.

We're going to run out of chakra at this rate! Sakura thought frantically, punching another monster away. "Hinata!" She yelled. "Don't bother fighting them all! Let's just get to dry land!"

"Right!" Hinata agreed. The two girls then charged as fast as they could towards the shore. More lake-monsters went at them, but Hinata was able to see them with her Byakugan. After a few minutes of zig-zaging, the two kunoichi were able to make it to the shore.

"We... (*Pant*) made it..." Sakura gasped. That was the most *terrifying* fifteen minutes of her life. Suddenly a shadow fell over them.

"Sakura?" Naruto asked, confused. "Hinata?"

D A T T E B A Y O

Elsewhere, Naruto dodged another pounce from Maroga. So far the fight between the two had been mostly Naruto staying out of reach from Maroga's teeth, it was starting to get old. Naruto had tried to escape using a clone-distraction, but the wolf monster was too smart for something like that, apparently.

I've can't waste my time with this thing, Naruto thought, jumping around. He then noticed a slight cliff to his left. *Hmmm... could work!*

Naruto quickly created three clones. Two ran away to the sidelines, while the third stayed with Naruto. Maroga ignored the two that ran. It only cared about the Naruto made of *meat*. Naruto and his clone

quickly ran for the cliff, but Maroga cut them off. Now the wolf monster was between the Leaf Ninja and the cliff. But that was just fine for Naruto. There was a brief pause, then...

Maroga charged! Jaws snapping, the wolf monster lunged at Naruto. When the monster was within biting range, the clone grabbed Naruto and flung him into the air. Ignoring the duplicate, Maroga looked up, watching its intended meal go up, knowing full well that e would have to come down *eventually* . However, it was so intent on Naruto that Maroga forgot about the other clones Naruto made, or the mass of spinning chakra they now held.

Great Ball Rasengan!

Naruto watched in satisfaction as his clones slammed the giant, spinning sphere into Maroga, sending the wolf thing flying off the cliff. After landing, he ran to the cliff's edge to see if that was the end of Maroga. To his surprise, he could see the wolf monster twitching and moaning in pain.

"Man... Even all that, it's still alive?" Naruto groaned. Straightening, he decided to be satisfied with getting rid of the monster anyway.

"Now to find mom!"

D A T T E B A Y O

Meanwhile, Inari was heading back to where he and Oda had left that strange lady.

"Inari, whaddya think yer gonna do?" Oda asked tiredly. Did the kid think that he could change anything?

"I'm gonna convince that lady to come with us." Inari said firmly. It didn't fair that that woman would be stuck on this island. "We're gonna make her come by force if we have to!"

Oda sighed, and wondered if he it would be ethical to knock Inari out and carry him to the Kingfish. They heard a screeching noise. A little ways from the cave, they saw something that resembled a beetle with huge jaws standing on its hind legs.

Wrestling champ of Monster Country: Baguzi

Directly in front of it was the lady!

"Oh my gosh!" Inari cried, "We gotta help her!"

The boy and sailor ran to her aid, but...

"OUTTA MY WAY!" Yelled the woman, swinging her leg upwards, landing a kick directly under Baguzi. The bug monster went flying up, into the sky and out of sight. Grumbling under her breath, the woman stomped off.

Inari and Oda stared.

"You still wanna force her t'come?" Oda asked.

D A T T E B A Y O

Kawazaki looked up from the river he was drinking from.

Was that...?

D A T T E B A Y O

Deep underground...

"I hope we find the way out soon..." Lee commented.

"What a drag..." Shikamaru groaned.

D A T T E B A Y O

Team Naruto positions-

Shika-Lee pair: Underground, heading northeast.

Saku-Hina pair: Northwest lake, heading east.

Ina-Oda pair: currently east

Kawazaki: In the middle, heading east

Naruto: North, heading east.

Kaiju 4

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto .

Opening theme: Hustle Muscle(1st opening theme of Kinnikuman Nisei)

Chapter 12: *Kaiju 4*

Kawazaki hopped along as fast as he can. Ever since he began to zero in on Kushina, he felt the oddest thing. Several chakras identical to Naruto's appeared out of nowhere and were scattered across the island. One had met up with Sakura and Hinata's chakras, the rest moved erratically along.

Is it Shadow Clones? Thought Kawazaki, jumping over a log. He paused to catch a passing fly with his tongue. *That technique was considered too dangerous to be taught regularly, only one of Jonin level could get near one of those scrolls, so how could Naruto...* Kawazaki slapped himself in disbelief. *It must have happened during Sarutobi's admidistration. That man was so lackluster...*

Sighing, Kawazaki kept moving right along. It was then he realized that one of the Naruto chakras was nearby!

"Naruto!" Kawazaki cried out. Out from the bushes did a Naruto indeed come.

"Kawazaki?" The Naruto asked. "There you are!"

After reuniting, Naruto explained what he had done.

"But where did learn the technique?" Kawazaki asked. Naruto simply smirked with an air of mischief. Kawazaki then pointed.

"I have locked onto your mother's chakra! She's that way!" He declared, and before he knew what was happening, Naruto had

grabbed him and they were on their way.

D A T T E B A Y O

As Naruto and the Saku-Hina pair ran toward their intended destination, something unusual happened. A large beetle monster fell from the sky, squashing Naruto!

"Naruto!" The two girls screamed. Under the insect's tummy did Naruto vanish in a puff of smoke.

"A clone...?" Hinata asked, confused.

"He must have been searching for us with them," Sakura deduced. She then saw something in the distance. "What's that?"

"Let me check." Hinata said, activating her Byakugan. "It's a woman!"

On the ground, Baguzi regained consciousness. Hearing Hinata's words, the giant insect scrambled to get away.

A ways away, the woman, leaning against a dead tree, got a better look at the two figures running up to her. As they came closer, she saw the symbol on their headbands.

"Leaf ninja, huh?" Images of whiskers and glowing red eyes flashed through her mind. She tightened her grip on the tree. With power belying her frame, the woman pulled the tree from the ground and flung it at Sakura and Hinata!

"DIE!" She screamed, watching as the two girls dived aside to avoid being crushed by the wood. Growling, she leapt into the air, and swung her leg down. The limb hit the rocky ground with the sound of bomb exploding, sending fragments of stone everywhere.

That's...that's like Tsunade's move! Sakura thought as she shielded her eyes from the shrapnel.

Hinata thought the same, but noticed something odd. Whenever Sakura used her super strength, her Byakugan could see the chakra flow into whatever limb she needed to strengthen.

Is she not using chakra? Hinata wondered, but soon had not time to think about it, as the woman swung her fist in an attempt to rend Hinata's head from her shoulders.

"Hold still, you stinking-!" the woman roared, blood in her eyes. Hinata saw that and realized that this woman was beyond talking too. In fact, she remembered seeing a similar look in her cousin Neji's eyes, before Naruto beat him in the Chunin Exam. The woman was too busy with Hinata that she didn't see Sakura in time to block her chakra-punch.

POW!

Sakura sent the woman flying away, where she crashed into a pile of rocks.

"You okay, Hinata?" Sakura asked.

"Yes, Sakura." Hinata answered.

Sakura took one look at the rock pile she sent that rampaging woman at. To her shock, the woman popped out of the rubble with nary a scratch on her. She brushed some dirt off and glared.

Sakura went pale. "Hinata, let's run!"

Hinata, who looked pretty pale herself, nodded.

"GET BACK HERE!" Screamed the woman, chasing the fleeing kunoichi.

D A T T E B A Y O

"Hmm?" Kawazaki looked up from his seat on Naruto's head.

"What is it?" Asked the whiskered ninja.

"I think that was Kushina's voice..." Murmured the frog.

That got Naruto's attention. "What?! Really?! Where!?"

"Over there!" Kawazaki yelled, pointing.

That's where Sakura and Hinata should be... Naruto thought. Suddenly, he felt something behind him. Whirling around, he saw what may have been the biggest, meanest-looking tiger.

Top Cat of Kaiju Island: Torayoma

Before Naruto could react, Torayoma whacked him with its paw, sending him and Kawazaki flying. Upon hitting the ground, Naruto 'poofed' out of existence.

"Wha-?!" Kawazaki was dumbfounded at first, but he caught on quickly. "Oh, just a clone." An ominous growling alerted him to the fact that he had other concerns.

D A T T E B A Y O

In a grassy area, Lee and Shikamaru poked their heads out of a large hole in the ground.

"See anything?" Shikamaru asked, scanning the area around him.

"No," Lee replied, looking in the other direction. "No monsters as far as the eye can see."

Shikamaru sighed, and pulled himself out of the ground. Lee did likewise.

"That's a relief." Shikamaru said, taking a moment to enjoy the sunlight. After that long walk in those dark caves, the solar energy seemed almost reviving. "Ever since we got here it's been one freak after another. I'll be glad to be off this island."

"As will I," Lee said, striking a 'nice-guy' pose, "But first we need to find the others- And Naruto's mother!"

Shikamaru grinned. "Right. Which reminds me..." He closed his eyes, taking his thinking pose. Opening them, he said, "We were heading east until that ape monster smashed us underground. But afterward we lost all sense of direction traveling through those tunnels. There's no telling how far off course we've went." He glanced up at the sun. "Judging by the sun, east is that way."

"So we should go east!" Lee declared.

Shikamaru held up a hand. "Not so fast. Like I've said, there's no telling where we are. Without Kawazaki to point us the way, we could end up missing Kushina completely. So the best course of action, for now, is to split up." The Nara heir pointed in one direction. "I'll go and scout that way. You go the other way. We meet back here in an hour."

The two shinobi went off in each direction, Shikamaru heading into a forest. Neither of them noticed the mound of dirt following Shikamaru...

D A T T E B A Y O

As Shikamaru ran through the forest, he saw a familiar figure, with blond spiky hair.

"Naruto!" Shikamaru cried, relieved.

"Shikamaru?" Naruto asked, then looked relieved. "Hey! Where've you be-"

That was as far as Naruto got, when a huge pair of claws came from underground, piercing him!

"Naruto!" Shikamaru cried, horrified. Images of Asuma's death whirled through his head.

No, not again...

To his surprise, Naruto 'poofed' out of existence. Shikamaru stared for a moment, and breathed a sigh of relief.

Only a clone... He thought, then saw what had pierced it. Out from under the ground came the biggest and ugliest mole he had seen.

Underworld Monster: Mogurama

Just back away... Shikamaru thought, edging back, teeth gritted.

Then Mogurama lunged-!

D A T T E B A Y O

Lee, meanwhile, found himself on a rocky seashore. He was about to head back when he heard a familiar voice.

"Heeey! Fuzzy-Eyebroows!"

Lee turned and saw none other than Naruto, running up to him, waving.

There he is! "Naruto! I've been looking for you!"

Laughing, Naruto was just about a yard away when something leapt from the ocean and landed on him!

"Ack!" Naruto groaned, poofing from existence.

"Naruto!" Lee cried in alarm. "What?!"

The creature from the sea vaguely resembled a human in basic shape, but that was all. Red, with huge pincers and covered in barnacles, the thing looked more like a huge crustacean in its outer appearance than a human being.

Warrior of the Deep: Kanibusshi

Kanibusshi took a fighting stance.

"Errgh...I don't have time to deal with you!" Lee yelled, taking off his leg-weights.

D A T T E B A Y O

Elsewhere, the real Naruto was running through a barren valley filled with skeletons from various monsters when the memories of his clones flooded back into him. He suddenly realized that his friends were in terrible danger.

Sakura, Hinata, Shikamaru, Lee, Kawazaki!

He was forcibly pulled out of his thoughts and thrown off his feet when he felt the ground shake suddenly. But it didn't feel like an earthquake, it felt more like...something big hitting the terra firma. Suddenly, a giant shadow fell over him. Almost dreading it, Naruto turned around. Directly behind him was a monster the size of Ozaru, only it appeared bigger in terms of ferocity. It was a huge lizard, vaguely resembling a tyrannosaurus rex, only it seemed bulkier. Its arms were muscular and longer, the length of its legs. Its scales were colored red, with the ones on the back black in a jagged formation, looking like obscure stripes. On its head were massive array of spikes, making it look like the lizard had a mohawk.

Undeclared of Kaiju Island: Ryukaiju

Trembling, Naruto gazed up at the massive lizard. Ryukaiju snorted, staring down at his intended dinner.

D A T T E B A Y O

"Wait a second!" Inari cried, "I just thought of something!"

D A T T E B A Y O(Author notes)

I just want to apologize for the delay. Sorry.

Shikamaru's Arcade

Kishimoto-san owns Naruto.

Opening theme: Close To Your Heart(3rd opening of Monster Rancher)

Chapter 13: *Shikamaru's Arcade*

"What? Whaddya mean?" Oda asked the Wave-lander.

"I think I know who that monster lady is!" Inari yelled excitedly.

Oda gave him a weird look. "If y'did, then yer a smarter swab than me," the rough character remarked. "What makes ya think ya know?"

"Well..." Inari looked away before continuing. "Remember when she told us that her son was dead?" Oda nodded. "Before we hired you, Naruto told us how awful it was, not having a mom." Inari looked up at Oda, eyes solemn. "The way he looked...it was the same way she looked."

Oda contemplated what Inari said, then his eyes went wide with realization. "Nuts on the high seas," The old sailor breathed, "Are you sayin' that woman is... *The Cap'n's mother?!* "

D A T T E B A Y O

Shikamaru threw a shuriken at Mogurama. The mole monster dove into the ground, burrowing out of sight. Shikamaru barely felt the earth under him begin to move when he realized what was going to him next. Leaping to the side, Shikamaru barely avoided being skewered by the mole's claws. Undeterred, Mogurama went back underground and tried to attack Shikamaru from below again, who dodged again. And again. And again. Very shortly the area was filled with holes.

This is like one of those stupid whack-a-mole games... Shikamaru thought, panting. And I'm the prize whe- if it wins! Shikamaru did *not* want to think about it getting him and what would happen afterwards. Jumping aside for the umpteenth time, a thought occurred to Shikamaru.

I can't keep this up forever, He thought frantically, I don't have monster stamina like Lee or Naruto. I need a plan!

Leaping one last time, Shikamaru jumped up one of the surrounding trees. Up on the highest, sturdiest branch and took his thinking pose. As he did, Mogurama popped from the ground and glared up at Shikamaru, beady eyes blinking.

Shikamaru's eyes snapped open as an idea came to mind. Doing a quick inventory check, Shikamaru began to check his surroundings. As he did, a plan slowly began to form in his mind.

Just might work... Shikamaru was shook out of his thoughts when he felt the tree shake. Looking down, he saw that Mogurama was gone, and a moving dirt mound was ramming at the tree base. The mole monster was trying to uproot the tree!

Better work fast! Shikamaru gritted his teeth and pulled out an exploding tag.

D A T T E B A Y O

Torayoma gave Kawazaki a cat's glare, almost trying to discern the identity of its prey. Kawazaki looked at his soon-to-be attacker with a face full of fear, his amphibious face turning a lighter shade of green. The tiger monster's end reared up, signifying its readiness to pounce. Panicking, Kawazaki blew into his pipe, giving Torayoma a blast of steam. The tiger monster reared back, yowling in discomfort. It bounded off into the bushes.

"Hmm!" Kawazaki gave his pipe one more puff. "That's that, I see."

Kawazaki spoke to soon. A minute later, Torayoma leapt out of the bushes- wearing a welder's mask over its face.

Kawazaki's froggy eyes bugged out. "EEHHHH!?"

D A T T E B A Y O

Shikamaru pulled out his lighter and a cigarette. Though he had never been able to emulate Asuma's chain-smoking habit, mostly because he hated the feeling of nicotine on his lungs, the 'One last smoke before I die' excuse had saved his butt on more than one occasion, which is why he carried around a pack and Asuma's lighter with him on each mission. Lighting the cigarette, Shikamaru tossed it at one of the holes Mogurama had made. The second the lit cigarette landed in the hole, the entire ground lit up in an tremendous series of explosions.

BURAKABOOM!

Ever since that incident with the zombie Akatsuki, Shikamaru had taken to carrying at great deal many exploding tags, more than what was needed. Using his shadow-manipulation techniques, Shikamaru painstakingly planted as many of those tags he could into Mogurama's holes. It didn't matter what hole Mogurama was in at the time of the explosion, because as Shikamaru deduced, the holes were all *connected* . That way, even if Mogurama was in a different hole than the one the first explosion began, the chain-reaction caused by the tags planted on the tunnel walls connecting the holes together would catch up to the mole monster.

I hope that worked, Shikamaru thought, gazing down at the smoke. IT would be too much to hope for that beast to have been killed, but Shikamaru hoped it had been knocked out at least. When the smoke cleared, Shikamaru could see several more holes caused by the blasts. However, he couldn't see Mogurama. He must have been scared off by the noise.

"That was close..." Shikamaru breathed, hopping down from his perch on the tree branch. When he hit the ground, the earth collapsed. He was now sitting in a crater. Looking around, he noticed that his tree was barely standing at the edge of the crater.

Looks like it might fall over any minute. Shikamaru thought. Looking down, he saw- to his horror- *a hole in the center of the crater!* Moments later, Mogurama leapt out of the hole, at Shikamaru and then-

Ker...ACK!!!

D A T T E B A Y O (Author notes)

Mwa ha ha...I am evil for making this cliffhanger, no?

And please review!

Battle at Sea

Kishimoto owns Naruto. Dig?

Opening theme: Kaze Ga Soyogu Basho (1st opening theme of Monster Rancher)

Chapter 14: *Battle at Sea*

Kawazaki hopped for his life, Torayoma still behind him. At the moment, he would have given his long tongue for any kind of assistance. Really now, he wasn't a fighter! Nor was he anything worth eating! Why was that oversized jungle cat attacking him?!

Bouncing through a bush, Kawazaki chanced a look behind to see if he had shaken off his attacker. No good, Torayoma was on his heels, still wearing that dumb mask. Kawazaki racked his brains for any answer to his problem. None came to mind, but out of the corner of his eye he spotted a pond to his right.

There! Kawazaki thought happily. Taking a hard right, Kawazaki dived into the water, going straight to the bottom. The pond wasn't very deep, but he felt safe, knowing that cats hated the water. As long as he stayed out of the reach of Torayoma's paws, there was nothing that tiger could do. Sure enough, he saw Torayoma gaze down through the water, glaring at his escaped prey. After a moment, Torayoma leapt into the water with all the force of a cannonball!

SPLOOSH!

The force of the splash knocked Kawazaki clear out of his hiding spot. He landed on a stump with an undignified clunk. Straightening himself up, Kawazaki saw to his immense shock that all of the water had been blasted out!

"Good grief..." Murmured the frog, blinking.

D A T T E B A Y O

"Leaf Hurricane!"

Lee swung his leg at Kanibusshi, but the crustacean warrior blocked the kick with his right arm. In the brief moment Lee had connected, Kanibusshi jabbed its left pincer at him, but the 'Handsome Blue Devil' kicked off of the blocking arm to avoid it. Landing away from the monster, Lee took a moment to reevaluate his opponent.

"I apologize," Lee said, looking at Kanibusshi in the eye. The crab monster cocked an eye. "I mistook you for an amateur." Tightening his muscles, Lee disappeared in a blur of movement.

Kanibusshi looked surprised for a moment, then closed its eyes. Almost immediately, the crustacean swung his leg around in a roundhouse kicked, nailing Lee in the stomach. Lee went flying, thankfully landing on the soft sand beyond the rocks.

"Oof!" Lee grunted. Rubbing his backside, Lee contemplated the situation. While it was true that Kanibusshi could keep up with his speed, Lee knew from experience there was more than speed was needed to win a fight. He thought about what Kawazaki had said about the island...

"If we encounter any monsters," Kawazaki said, lecturing the crew of the Kingfish, "Just run away. No one will think any less of you. I won't."

Lee nodded. This was a rescue mission, not a war on the Land of Monsters. He didn't need to fight.

And now there's nothing between me and the way out! Lee thought, making a run for the inland. However, Kanibusshi suddenly appeared before him, blocking the way.

"Aah! What!?" Lee groaned. Why was this monster being so obstinate?

Kanibusshi resumed its fighting stance, and Lee instantly understood.

"I see... You don't want to leave this fight undecided." Lee murmured. Struggling a little, he took off his chunin vest, tossing it away. The vest landed in the sand, sinking *very* deeply. Although most upper-level ninja used the extra pockets on their vests as holders for their various tools, Lee had found a different use. By filling the pockets with lead, Lee had turned what should have been standard uniform amongst the Leaf Ninja into an effective means of training. And now that he had taken the vest off, as well as the leg weights, there was nothing to hold him back...literally!

"Unfortunately for you," Lee yelled, charging at his newfound rival, "I have no time to waste!"

What followed was a flurry of blows. Punches, kicks, jabs, and feints, exchanged by both combatants. For a moment, they both seemed equal. Though Lee could never rival Kanibusshi's monster strength, he was able to fend off the crustacean's blows by pushing them to the side, instead of blocking them entirely. Unfortunately, this did not last for very long. In one brief lull in the fighting, Kanibusshi clamped his pincers on Lee's arms. While this made it impossible for either of them to use their arms, Kanibusshi's power made it more painful for Lee.

"A...Augh!" Lee cried in pain. Then he felt a sharp blow in his gut. Kanibusshi was kicking him!

Swinging his legs up, Lee gave Kanibusshi a twin kick on the chin... figuratively speaking. Though he wasn't strong enough to make the kicks hurt, they were enough to loosen Kanibusshi's grip on his arms. Leaping away, Lee took the chance to catch his breath.

Owww... My arms... Lee thought, feeling his arms burn with pain. *It's too dangerous for a frontal assault, and he's too fast to outrun...*

Seeming bored, Kanibusshi charged at his opponent and chosen rival.

I have no choice...! 1 st Gate, open! Opening Gate!

Lee felt a faint rush of power as his brain released the restraints on his muscles. Now gifted with extra speed and strength, Lee was in front of Kanibusshi in an second. Before the crustacean could react, Lee swept his feet out from under him, knocking the monster over. While the sea monster was off-balance, Lee zipped around and slammed his foot into Kanibusshi's back, sending him forward. Before Kanibusshi hit the beach, though, Lee was in front and below him. A sudden upward kick on Lee's part sent Kanibusshi flying skyward. Lee jumped up and was behind the crustacean. Unraveling the bandages, Lee wrapped them around Kanibusshi. Normally, this wouldn't have held Kanibusshi for long, but Lee was hoping to finish it before he did.

Front Lotus!

Spinning in the air, Lee and his prisoner began to spiral downwards, plummeting at top speed. As they were falling, Lee shifted a little, so that they began to fall backwards instead of straight down. It was a bit of a gamble, since the downward spiral was needed to increase the effectiveness of the Lotus, but it would be even less effective to drive Kanibusshi into the sand...as oppose to the rocks.

At the last minute, Lee released his captive, tumbling onto the sand. Sitting up, he watched as the crustacean crashed into the rocks, sending up a gravel and water.

KERASHASHASH!

For a moment, there was silence. Lee looked on with baited breath, hoping beyond hope that Kanibusshi wouldn't get up. When the sea monster didn't appear, Lee fell back, panting from exhaustion.

"I... *Huff* ...won..." Lee gasped, unable to believe his luck. Then he felt a jab of pain as the backlash of the Lotus kicked in...

And then, darkness.

D A T T E B A Y O

Uwaaa! This is the LONGEST fight I've ever done!

Naruto's Final Battle

Naruto is owned by Kishimoto-san

Opening theme: Name(4th opening of Monster Rancher)

Chapter 15: *Naruto's Final Battle!*

"Did we lose her?" Sakura asked, sitting behind a rock, panting. It felt like she and Hinata had been running for hours, being chased by that insane woman.

Hinata nodded. "Yes, she's gone." Though in Hinata's private opinion, it wasn't that they lost their assailant. While chasing them, that woman had slowed down more and more, until she was out of sight. It was as if she had lost interest...

"Heey! Sakuraa! Hinataaa!"

The sound of a young boy's voice caught their attention. Looking forward, they saw none other than the boy-sailor pair.

"Inari? Mr. Oda?" Hinata blinked.

"What are they doing here?" Sakura asked, confused.

"Ahoy!" Oda yelled, waving. "Fancy seein' you here, ladies! What's goin' on?"

"That's my line!" Sakura yelled, "Why aren't you at the ship?!"

"Well!" Inari began, about to divulge Oda's run in with the flying monster, when the sailor covered his mouth.

"Long story," Oda said quickly, "You seen a woman with super strength?"

"Seen her?" Sakura asked, stupefied, "We nearly got killed by her! Do you know who she was?"

And so...

"WHAT!?" Sakura cried, her hair becoming frazzled from shock.

"That woman...is Naruto's mother?" Hinata asked faintly.

"That's what I think." Inari answered. "'Cause Kawazaki didn't tell us there was anyone else on the island, right?"

That makes sense, Sakura thought, calming down. On further recollection, that woman's face looked a great deal like Naruto's when he was angry; a crazed, monstrous look, one that promised vengeance against the offender.

(See chapter 22, page 6, panel 1 for reference)

"So do ya know where she is?" Oda asked. "We need t'tell her that her son, the Cap'n, is alive, 'cause she thinks he's dead, an'-" Oda trailed off. "Where is the Cap'n, anyway? An' those other swabs? Weren't you all together?"

"That's a...long story." Sakura said, sweatdropping. *I can't tell them we got sent flying by a monkey...* "We got separated by some monsters."

"What?! But we gotta tell Bro about his mom!" Inari cried. "And we gotta tell his mom about Bro!"

"But what can we do?" Sakura asked, "We don't know where any of them are! And without Kawazaki, we'd have to search the entire island just to find *one* of them!"

"Umm," Hinata said, hesitantly, "I-I could do that..." When everyone looked at her, she blushed, unused to all the attention. "Well...I was thinking...maybe I could channel my chakra to my eyes...increasing

the power of the Byakugan. S-sort of like what Kiba does with his nose..."

The rest just stared at her. Hinata blushed even more. "It, it's not very difficult to do... Brother Neji taught me how..."

Sakura brightened. "That's brilliant, Hinata! We could find where *everyone* is that way! Go for it!"

Hinata closed her eyes and began to concentrate. For a brief moment, all was still in anticipation. Then, her eyes flashed open, and the unique nerves surrounding her brain pulsed alive, and the group felt a faint sensation, like a brief wave of wind.

"I...I see them!" Hinata gasped, shaking a little, trying to maintain her focus. "Naruto, and his mother... I know where they are!" She pointed at one o' clock. "Naruto's that way! And Kushina..." She pointed at seven o' clock. "That way!"

Hinata released her concentration and her veins faded back out of sight. "I couldn't find the others, though..."

Sakura nodded. "That'll have to do. Lee, Shikamaru, and Kawazaki are smart enough to take care of themselves, but who knows what Naruto could get into unsupervised." She began to move. "Let's go!"

"Hold it!" Yelled Inari. "What about Bro's mom? We need to bring her along, that's why we came here, right?"

Sakura's mind went back to Kushina's attack earlier. "I'm not sure I want to see her again without Naruto..."

Oda took this moment to speak up. "I'm with Sakura, it'd be better to bring the Cap'n to his mom, first."

"Umm, but Naruto be upset if we don't find his mother...?" Hinata asked, worriedly.

"Okay, okay!" Sakura said, feeling a headache coming on. "We'll split up. Me and Oda will go get Naruto...Hinata, you and Inari chase down his mother. Everybody happy with that?"

"Yes, ma'am!" The three answered, feeling afraid of her facial expression(A look she learned from Princess Tsunade...).

And so the two pairs set off on their preferred paths.

D A T T E B A Y O

At this time, Naruto was staring up at the massive monster he had been fighting. Though, 'trying to fight' would have been a better description of the progress he had made against Ryukaiju. Nothing he tried so far had any effect on the giant lizard, aside from making it a little dirty.

Even this...! Naruto thought, looking at the trench knife Asuma had given him. *His hide's way to thick to be cut up by normal wind chakra... No choice, I guess...*

Naruto created at least twenty clones.

"Keep him busy!" Naruto ordered, and took one clone aside. "You, help me out!"

As the other nineteen clones jumped and danced around Ryukaiju, Naruto and the twentieth clone ran at least fifty yards back, far away from the monster.

The Spiral-Shuriken might be too dangerous...I'll gamble it all on the Odama Rasengan! Naruto thought, and he and the clone began to form the chakra.

While the Odama appeared to be just a larger version of the Rasengan, there were a few differences. The extra chakra packed into the sphere made it too heavy and unstable to hold with just one body. While the clone was needed to make a regular Rasengan

faster(He could make it by himself, but it took longer to do so), he especially needed it to hold the Odama up move with it. Naruto tried to use the Odama one-handed once, but that ended with him waking up a week later, a mile from where he started!

It's almost there... Naruto thought, beginning to sweat. Not from the strain, but from worry. Ryukaiju had just about wiped out all of his clones! And now he had Naruto in his sights!

Good thing I put some distance between us, Naruto thought, gritting his teeth. *Even if he's a fast one, it should take him a few minutes to get near me...*

However, instead of moving to close the gap between, Ryukaiju did something odd. He reared back, took a deep breath...and breathed fire!

FWOOOSH!

The stream of burning energy hit Naruto dead-on, causing him to lose focus. This also had the side-effect of the Odama self-destructing.

POW!

Naruto was blasted into the air by the impact, hitting the ground with a loud thud. He lay there, unmoving, as Ryukaiju roared triumphantly.

Groaning, Naruto tried to get up, but couldn't. His left arm had lost feeling. He hurt all over.

I'm going to die...

As Ryukaiju came ever closer, the ground shaking with each step, Naruto saw it again. That red-haired, smiling face, more beautiful than anything he had seen before.

... Mama.

I wanted to see you so much. I had so much to ask you... But I guess you wouldn't want a demon-brat like me for a son anyway.

No one would...

As Naruto began to lose consciousness, a memory he didn't know he had, from the deepest, darkest corner of his subconscious...

" If I catch any of you mistreating my son..." The red-headed beauty said, her eyes full of malice and fury. " I'll kill every single one of you. Naruto's my son, and I'll fight tooth and nail to protect him, even if it means becoming your enemy."

Naruto's eyes popped open, tears streaming down his face. Was that real? Groaning, Naruto forced himself up, doing his best to ignore the pain in his body.

Mama... If you were gonna really do that for me...then I can't die here! Sakura, Inari, everyone... You're all in trouble too, right? Don't worry... As soon as I'm done here, I'm coming to save ya! Wait for me!

Ryukaiju stood over Naruto, only one step away from squashing Naruto. Naruto, too half-dead to really care, jutted out his arm straight up, palm spread out. While it was true that the Rasengan wouldn't do much, Naruto had one last hope...The wind-release Rasengan!

Please, let this work... Naruto thought, concentrating.

While it was true he couldn't hold the wind-style Rasengan for very long one-handed, Naruto was hoping that Ryukaiju would be close enough to get hit by it before it canceled out.

Form the chakra...

Ryukaiju snorted, gazing down at the whiskered ninja.

Manipulate its form...

The lizard lifted its huge foot.

Mix in the wind-element... Naruto's hand began to shake and throb.

Ryukaiju brought the massive foot down.

Can't...hold it...

BWA-WOOOOOSH!!!

Suddenly, there was an explosion of spinning wind. When the dust had settled, Ryukaiju was gone. Naruto stood still, his hair was messed up more than usual, and his headband knocked off. His arm was still in the air. He had a strange, bewildered look on his face.

"Wha...What was that?" Naruto murmured, transfixed. "That wasn't a Rasengan..."

D A T T E B A Y O

Odama Rasengan means Great Ball Spiraling Sphere.

Mama

Kishimoto owns Naruto

Opening theme: Alones(6th opening of Bleach)

Chapter 16: *Mama*

Naruto stood there, unmoving, trying to arrange the chaotic disorder that was his thoughts into a reasonable line of mentality.

"Did... Did I win?" Naruto asked faintly, trying to figure out what happened. His Wind-release had self-destructed, and there was this big explosion of swirling air, like a tornado appeared instantly, when everything calmed down, Ryukaiju was gone. Was he sent flying...?

"Hey! Narutoooo!" A pretty voice called out.

Coming out of his trance, Naruto looked over to where the voice had come from. Over a nearby came Sakura and...Oda?!

"Sakura? Oda?" Naruto asked, blinking. "What the...?"

"What happened here?" Sakura cried, running up to the whiskered ninja. "We saw some big thing fly over us... are you alright?"

"Yeah, I'm fine- OW!" Naruto felt a throbbing pain in his arm.

"Let me take care of that." As Sakura began to heal Naruto's injuries with her medical Ninjutsu, Naruto explained what transpired.

"Nuts on the high seas," Said Oda, "A monster like that, and ya sent it flying?"

"I think so," Naruto replied, rubbing his fixed arm. It was no longer numb. Then a thought occurred to him. "Oh...crud! Shikamaru! Lee! Kawazaki! We gotta help them! They're in danger! They-!"

"It's awfully loud here, must be the right place." A lazy voice drawled.

Looking over to the source, the three saw Shikamaru coming out from behind a pile of rocks. He was looking pretty dirty, with some scratches on his face, and splinters in his hair.

"Shikamaru..." Naruto breathed, unable to believe it. He thought Shikamaru had been monster chow...

"Man, you would believe the time I had. This island is messed up." Shikamaru groaned, stretching.

"What happened to you?" Sakura asked, coming to his aid. He didn't look *too* roughed up, but...

And so Shikamaru explained his 'fight' with Mogurama.

"...It would have got me, but luckily the explosions had weakened the base of a tree nearby. That mole thing was so intent on me that it didn't see it coming until...Splat!" Shikamaru finished. "Your stupid luck must be rubbing off on me."

Naruto harrumphed. "It's cool that you're okay, but we still have to find Lee and Kawazaki!"

"There is no need to worry!" A bright voice called out. Out from behind a large skeleton leapt Lee, with Kawazaki on his shoulder!

"Guys!" Cried Naruto.

Lee landed in front of the group, panting. He waved. "How are you doing?"

"I'm doing great!" Naruto laughed. For some reason, Lee's bowl cut was full of sand. "What's with your head?"

"After a victory over a fighting monster, I fell asleep on the beach from exhaustion." Lee replied. "I was looking for you when I heard

that explosion. On my way here, I ran into Mr. Kawazaki and he helped me locate you all."

On Lee's shoulder, Kawazaki waved.

"That's a relief," Naruto sighed. He looked at the gathered allies. "Now all we need to do is find Hinata and..." Naruto trailed off as he looked at Oda. "Hey, what are you doing here, anyway? Why aren't you at the ship with Inari?"

"Long story." Oda replied. "Bu' she's with Hinata, so don' worry."

Sakura gasped. "Oh! That's right! Naruto! I think we found her!"

Naruto looked confused, squinting in his foxy way. "Who?"

" *Who?! Oh, for the love of...*" Sakura rolled her eyes skyward, asking the man upstairs for strength. "Your mom, you idiot! Hinata and Inari went to meet up with her while Oda and I came here!"

Naruto's eyes went wide. "Is...Is that true?" He asked slowly.

"It should be," Kawazaki put in, his eyes closed in concentration. "I can sense Ms. Hyuuga and Inari's chakra near where your mother should be."

A strange, shaky smile appeared on Naruto's face. "Then what are we doing here? *Let's go!* "

D A T T E B A Y O

As the band traveled toward their intended destination, with Kawazaki directing, Naruto took a moment to ask the frog how he escaped from that huge tiger.

"Oh, it wasn't easy, Naruto." Kawazaki began. "That feline was most determined to hunt me down. Luckily, I stumbled upon an easy solution to my dilemma..."

"Nooo!" Wailed Kawazaki, backed up against a rock. "Get awaaaay!"

Torayoma didn't listen. It didn't care what Kawazaki had to say, as it stalked up to him, ready to end the hunt.

Kawazaki, in desperation, grabbed a small rock next to him and flung it at the tiger monster. The projectile hit Torayoma dead-on, and its eyes rolled up into the back of its head. The giant jungle cat fell over, a bump on its forehead, spirals for eyes.

"Hmm?" Kawazaki nudged the tiger with his pipe. It didn't move.
"Out cold."

"...And that was how I defeated the dreaded tiger monster."
Kawazaki concluded.

No one had anything polite to say to that. Naruto didn't know what to say period.

By the time they met up with Hinata and Inari, the day was nearing an end. The Hyuuga-boy pair were standing near the entrance to a what looked like a cave.

"She's that way." Inari said, pointing into the cave. "But she won't talk to us. She won't move, she just...sits there."

After looking at Kawazaki for confirmation, Naruto walked into the cave. After a few minutes of walking, Naruto came out of the cave and out onto a cliff overlooking the sea. The sunset was right in front of the cliff point. And sitting at the edge of the cliff was...

A woman.

This woman was his mother. It must be. It *had* to be!

"Ah..." Naruto felt his throat dry up. What was he going to say? What should he say? What *could* he say? This woman... This was his mother. A month ago he didn't know he had a mother, and now here she was, right in front of him.

"Hello, mama." He said at last. No answer. The woman didn't even move. "I'm your son, Naruto." Still no answer. Naruto was starting to get frustrated. "I'm your son, whaddya think of me? Answer me!"

When the woman refused to budge, Naruto felt tears come to his eyes.

"I...I don't know why you're here." He said, trembling. "I don't even wanna know why. But..." Naruto felt himself breaking apart. "I...I want to know who you are. Until a month ago I didn't think I had a mom, or any parents. Please...come back to me."

The woman stayed silent, though she was starting to shake as well.

"I can do the Shadow Clone Technique!" Naruto yelled suddenly. "And the Rasengan, and I can summon toads and stuff! Whaddya think of that?!"

No reply.

"Please...say something. Anything. I'm tired" Naruto moaned, unable to take it anymore. "I... *I don't wanna be alone, mama!* "

Naruto fell down on his knees, unable to take it anymore. Then, the woman got up. Slowly, she turned around, and for a brief moment, the two gazed into each other's eyes.

She's so beautiful... Naruto thought, staring her albeit dirty face. The woman, however, was thinking something else entirely.

Whiskers. She thought, and an image of small baby with similar markings came to her mind. Tears began to well up in her gorgeous green eyes.

"Naruto?" Kushina asked, unable to believe her eyes.

"Mama?" Naruto asked, taking a step forward.

"Naruto..." Kushina ran towards Naruto

"Mama..." Naruto got up and ran toward his mother.

" *Naruto!* " Tears began to pour from Kushina's eyes.

" *Mama!* " Naruto wailed.

Mother and son collapsed into each other, sobbing.

"Oh, my son...My sweet baby, you're alive, *oh, god ...*" Kushina kissed Naruto's face. "Let me look at you... *Oh, Naruto!* " Kushina squeezed her arms around Naruto into a powerful hug.

"Mama...Mama..." Naruto sobbed, unable to stop the pouring tears.

This is real! This is real! I'm not dreaming! This is my mother!

D A T T E B A Y O

Next time, the final chapter!

The New Home

Kishimoto owns Naruto

Opening Theme: Sunrise(1st opening theme of SD Gundam Force)

Chapter 17: *The New Home*

After the mother-son pair finished crying out fourteen years of separation, they stood up. Taking a step back, Kushina took a moment to get a better look at her long-lost son.

He looks so much like Minato did, she thought. Her eyes focused on his whisker markings. *But still like a fox.*

"My boy..." She said softly. She pulled Naruto into a soft hug. "I'm so sorry." She looked him directly in the eye. "I should have been there. I know what kind of life you led, I'm sure of it. To get stuck on this island while you were growing, and needed me..." Tears begin to leak from her eyes again.

"It's okay." Naruto said, smiling. "I don't blame you. I know it's not your fault." He grinned, looking foxy like he did. "It's weird, but when I found out you were going to raise hell to protect me, it gave me the strength to find you."

Sobbing, Kushina pulled Naruto back into the hug.

Near the tunnel entrance, the rest of the Team watched the reunion.

"Is Naruto...crying?" Sakura wondered aloud.

"I do not blame him," Lee said, tears streaming down his face. "Such a joyous reunion would make even the coldest eyes flood with tears!" Lee quickly put his arm to his face to hide his crying visage.

Shikamaru nodded, a firm smile fixed on his features. Hinata smiled more kindly.

Naruto's so happy...

It was at this point Kushina saw the people over her son's eye.
"Huh? Who're those guys?"

Naruto remembered he wasn't alone on this island and separated from Kushina. Gesturing with arm, he said, "Mama, I want you to meet my Team. They helped me get here and find." Loudly, Naruto called out to the crew. "C'mon out, guys!"

As the crew came out, Naruto introduced each one in turn.

"That's Sakura..."

Pink hair? Kushina thought, confused.

"Hinata..."

No curse mark, weird. Kushina thought, recognizing her as a Hyuga.
I didn't think the Main House let its members onto the field.

"Lee..."

Did that Might squirt have a son!? Kushina thought frantically, taken aback by Lee's eyebrows.

"Shikamaru..."

Oh, great. Nara's kid. Looks just like his dad... Kushina mentally sighed.

"That's Inari, from the Land of Waves..."

Oh, him again. Kushina remembered the little boy she met earlier.

"And that old guy's Oda, a sailor..."

That sounds familiar...but why? Kushina wondered.

"And this guy," Naruto picked up Kawazaki and held him up for all to see. "Is Kawazaki! He's the guy who told me where you were! Without him, I'd have never known you were alive!"

"Hello, Kushina," Kawazaki said, giving a 'that's life' shrug.

Kushina blinked. "Huh, I remember you. One of the acolytes from Mt. Oinari, right?"

"You're not surprised by the *talking frog* ?!" Shikamaru asked, unbelieving. Everyone else, was!

Kushina laughed. "Your village has more summoned animals than any other, and a talking frog upsets you?"

" We've got turtles, dogs, toads, apes..." Naruto counted off his fingers, "But no frogs."

Kushina shrugged. "If you ever go near Oinari, you'll find stuff stranger than him. Anyway!" Kushina took a deep breath before bowing before the crew minus Naruto, who stood beside her with Kawazaki. "Thank you so much for bringing my son to me. I've spent each day for the last believing he was killed. I didn't live or kill myself because I believed I deserved to be stuck here for not protecting him. To see him again like this... No words can express my gratitude. Thank you."

Inari grinned. "No problem. Now let's get outta here before some big monster comes out after us!"

Naruto put Kawazaki on the ground. "Right. So who remembers where the ship is?"

A long silenced followed.

D A T T E B A Y O

And so, Team Naruto and Kushina ended up walking along the shore Lee defeated Kanibusshi. However, the crustacean monster was nowhere to be scene. Since they anchored the Kingfish off of the coastline and no one remembered the way back, the only thing to do was to trek along the beach in hopes of finding the Kingfish.

As they walked, Kushina insisted on being told everything she had missed out on Naruto's life, and he told her everything. His early years, befriending Iruka, entering the academy, his pranks(Kushina laughed outloud when he mentioned the graffiti incident), the events surrounding his graduation(The other Leaf Ninja were surprised to hear Naruto had beaten up Mizuki), and everything else.

As Naruto regaled his life to his long-lost mother, a thought occurred to Shikamaru.

"You know, as loud and as he is, we really don't know a thing about Naruto." He commented.

"I don't think any of us do," Sakura sighed sadly, being once again reminded of the huge gap between her and her teammate. Over by Naruto and Kushina, the mother was comforting her son when got to Sasuke's leaving the Leaf Village.

D A T T E B A Y O

Back in the Leaf Village itself, the townsfolk were caught up in a flurry of rumors. Word had gotten out that Naruto had a mother he was bringing to the village, so the most asked question was *what's she like?*

"I asked my dad that." Choji said through a bite of cooked meat.

"Yeah? And what did he say?" Kiba asked.

The remaining members of Team Asuma Kurena and Gai were having an "Important conference to discuss the new revelation concerning Naruto's long-lost mother"(As Shino called it) at an

outside café, as no other restaurant would allow the adult Akamaru inside.

Choji swallowed. "He didn't say. He just clutched his head and shook."

"My dad did the same thing!" Ino cried out. "I've never seen him look so scared!"

"Most of the adults in the village seem scared." Neji noted. "I wonder what kind of woman she is to terrify Lord Hiashi to such an extent." As far as Neji knew, *nothing* and *no one* caused the cool-headed Hyuga Clan head to break out into a cold sweat.

"Maybe this mom of Naruto's some kind of S-class super criminal!" Kiba broke in excitedly.

"If that was true, the name 'Uzumaki Kushina' would be in a bingo book," Shino broke in, putting the breaks on Kiba's theory.

"You know, I asked Lady Hokage's assistant, Shizune, if she knew anything," Tenten said, stirring her drink. "She said that this Kushina is a lot like Naruto." Takin a sip, Tenten continued. "Can you imagine what an adult, female version of Naruto must be like?"

There was a long pause as everyone took that in. Suddenly, their elders' fear of this Kushina made sense...

"Whatever the reason, the elders' fear might have something to do with Naruto's taboo," Shino said, "Whatever it is."

That was for sure. The gang couldn't help but notice that there was something about Naruto the older villagers didn't like, something that went beyond his early years of prank-playing. Did Kushina have a hand in the taboo...? Or was she responsible for it? No one said anything, but the bizarre scenarios were forming in their heads. Every possible occupation this mysterious mother could have was being imagined; pirate, bandit, thief, murderer, demon...

"Hold on, aren't we getting ahead of ourselves?!" Ino yelled, waving her hands.

D A T T E B A Y O

Back on the Land of Monsters, the group had finally found where they beached their ship, the Kingfish. By this time the sky had grown dark, as night had fallen. Henceforth, it was decided to set sail the very next morning. As the gang camped out on the beach, Naruto had one last question for his mom.

"Mama...?" Naruto asked sleepily. Fatigue was finally catching with him.

"What, Naruto?" Kushina murmured, almost asleep.

"How did my father die?" Naruto felt his eyes begin to close of their own will.

"Mm," Kushina adjusted her sleeping position before answering. "He died sealing the Fox into you..."

"Oh." Naruto replied absentmindedly. It wasn't until morning that the full impact of her answer hit him.

"EHHHHH?!"

The next morning, everyone got aboard the Kingfish for the departure.

"Are you okay?" Sakura asked Naruto. For some reason, he looked incredibly shaken, but immensely vindicated as well.

"Huh? Oh...it's nothing." Naruto waved her off.

I'll think I'll keep my father's identity a secret...

As the ship departed, Kushina looked back at the island, slowly shrinking into the distance.

Naruto noticed this. "Mama?" He asked.

"It's weird..." Kushina said softly. "For fourteen years, I've lived here, doing no more than surviving like an animal... Then you come and change everything." She looked at her son and smiled. "Your father was right from the start. You are a hero."

Naruto blushed. No matter how much he told everyone, to be called that wasn't something he was used to.

"Let's go home...son."

Things were going to change, that was for sure. Not just for Naruto, but for the entire Leaf Village. When they returned, it would be the beginning...of Naruto's family life.

Ending theme: Faith(One Piece 10th ending theme, English version)

Even if

There are times when we are far apart

Through it all

Remember

I'll be there in your heart

*And on days when you start to cry, you know you'll always have
someone who's there at your side*

To wipe all the tears away

We will never yield, we won't back down

We'll keep our dreams alive

They'll never

Change the way we feel inside

And the light that shine eternally

So many try to grasp

Will someday

Be held within our hand at last

D A T T E B A Y O

So that's it! Story's over! Thank you to all those who reviewed, I really appreciate it! I may write a sequel that involves Kushina adjusting to life in the Leaf...and the Leaf adjusting to Kushina! I just wish Kishimoto-san would make Naruto more interesting, he's lost his touch... And I hope he reveals more about Naruto's ancestry, it'd be cool to learn more about the 4th and Kushi-chan! I've also got this weird theory that Naruto is related to Tsunade somehow...but that's not important. Adios, amigos!